

HISTORIES Of Some of the PENITENTS

IN THE
MAGDALEN-HOUSE,

AS
Supposed to be related by Themselves.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

In the corrupted Currents of this World,
Offence's gilded Hand may shove by Justice :
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked Prize itself
Buys out the Law : But 'tis not so Above ;
THERE is no shuffling ; THERE the Action lies
In his true Nature ; and we ourselves compell'd,
Ev'n to the Teeth and Forehead of our Faults,
To give in Evidence. What then ? What rests ?
Try what REPENTANCE can : What can it not ?

SHAKESP.

VOL. II.

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M.DCC.LX.

meeting the next day; and was soon
received, and my children taken care
of.

Here has all my misfortune ended;
and here I hope, by repentance, to
wash out my sins. The hope of mer-
cy is my consolation, and great as my
offences are, I know Divine mercy is
greater; and thus can pardon what is
too atrocious to be expiated by repen-
tance; and my life shall pass in peni-
tence for that which I wish by asking



for we are all sinners, and in many
who have like me, and many of re-

formation, and I have been a
very poor creature, and I have been
a very poor creature, and I have been
a very poor creature, and I have been

which is written in the book of
the church, I have been
a very poor creature, and I have been

found out a very poor creature, and I have been
a very poor creature, and I have been



THE
HISTORIES
Of Some of the
PENITENTS
IN THE
MAGDALEN-HOUSE.

CHAP. I.

None knew, till guilt created fear,
What darts or poison'd arrows were.

ROSCOMMON.



LL my young acquaintance
were continually advising me
to leave my mistress, and
go to London, where I might
find out my mother; or, if I failed in
that, could not be nearer starving than
where I was. They had so little no-

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tion of the size of this metropolis, and the numbers it contains, that they persuaded me it could be no very difficult matter to find out Madam Tent; who seemed to them, by the accounts of her, to be such a very fine lady, that there could not be many such, even in London.

My ignorance was not likely to be less than theirs; since I had scarcely ever heard the name of the town but from them: and the advice so many *good friends* gave me, joined with my dislike of my place, and the desire of finding myself the daughter of a great Lady, determined me to execute this scheme, after I had lived near two years with my mistress.

I was not quite fifteen when I set out, without any money in my pocket, but just what was necessary to pay for my passage in the waggon, and my maintenance on the road; for part of which I was obliged to some visitors
to

to my mistress at Christmas ; and the remainder was the contribution of those who advised me to this step ; to whom I was to make a grateful return, when I was settled with my *Mamma*. I had so little fear of not finding her, that I was not at all disturbed by the emptiness of my pocket.

The waggon arrived in London about noon. My possessions went into so small a compass, that I carried them with ease under my arm ; and, as soon as I alighted, went the way which chance directed me, inquiring of every body where Madam Tent lived. Some laughed, others answered me surlily ; but as I knew no way of accounting for this behaviour, I did not attribute it to any absurdity in my question. I strayed in this manner a long time, hoping every good house I saw was Madam Tent's ; but the frequent disappointments I met with began to discourage me.

At last, having put the same question to a man who stood at a shop-door, to my great joy he told me he knew such an one well enough; but asked, what Madam Tent I meant? "My mother, an't please your Honour," replied I, who took him for a very fine gentleman, never having seen even the Squire of our parish with so much lace on his waistcoat.

'Oh!' answered he, 'then it is the same: she lives in the next street: it must be her; for she is mother to a great many.'

"If she has so many children," said I, "it may be she will not be glad to have any more."

'Never fear,' answered the man; 'she will hardly refuse such a daughter as you are: no, if there were an hundred like you, they would be all welcome: she is mighty good-humoured; an excellent kind mother you will find her.'

"Alack, Sir!" I replied, "I am proud to hear it." And being particularly

cularly directed, I went to the house; where knocking with much impatience, I soon brought a woman to the door, who asked me, with no very smiling countenance, what I wanted? I told her, "Madam Tent." The girl looked very hard at me; and then bidding me come along with her, carried me in to her mistress.

Madam Tent might sooner claim an air of dignity than of gentility. She was fat, red-faced, and dirty; her cloaths half off, for want of pinning; and, in short, so intirely the reverse of my late mistress, that I found a charm in what would have disgusted any one else. I was so much awed by the presence of so great a Lady, as I fancied her, that I stood dropping my little country court'sies at the door, as fast as could be, without attempting to speak.

The good Lady, seeing there was no end of my civility, or my silence, came

up to me, and taking my hand, and smiling with wonderful affability, asked me if I wanted her? She exhorted me many times not to be ashamed of telling her what brought me there, before I could get courage to inform her, that, "if I might be so bold, I believed she was my mother." 'Very likely,' replied she, 'my pretty dear; or if I am not already, I am willing to be so: but tell me, my love, how I came to be your mother.'

Encouraged by her kind expressions, I gave her the best account I could of my birth, and of the resolution I had taken to find out my mother, and how long I had walked about the town before any one would tell me where she lived.

I saw my supposed mother give a significant look at a young woman, who was in the room, which I imagined implied her approbation of my courage in seeking her out; and then

ex-

expressing great joy at finding her lost daughter, embraced and kissed me, and told me, that she would introduce me to a great many sisters. Accordingly several young women were called down, who all received me very kindly, and asked me many questions. I saw they were diverted at my answers; which I did not wonder at, as I was sensible I must appear very odd and awkward to such fine ladies.

I need not tell you, that this supposed mother of mine was an old bawd, whose name being the same of that I was inquiring for, it was not strange I fell into her hands. But to render the motives for her proceedings better understood, I shall tell your her views as I go on in my story, tho' I did not know them till some time afterwards.

As soon as she saw me, my extreme youth, my fresh complexion, and the great innocence and simplicity of my appearance, made her think me no

small acquisition. When she heard what brought me there, she readily acquiesced in the claim I laid to her; and resolved neither to undeceive me, nor to suffer me to be broke of my innocent awkwardness, which she thought would be a great charm to many men; and tho' often imitated, yet could never be equalled by any art. For this purpose she charged all her young women to avoid every thing that could lessen my ignorance in any particular; and began to consider how to turn her young savage to the best account.

She kept me out of the way of her company, telling me I must not appear till she had got me cloaths fit for her daughter; and a mantua-maker was employed to fit some she had by her to my person. The hopes she had of turning me to her advantage, put her in such good humour, that to appear fond of me was no hard task; and I was delighted to find the man's account of her good-nature so true.

As

As I perceived an awkwardness in my manner and expression, I was desirous of correcting it, and begged my mother and sisters would assist me in polishing myself; but my mother charged me to avoid making the least alteration in either; for she should not love me half so well, if I was without those peculiarities; and assured me they would be looked upon by every one as so many graces; for nothing was so attracting as novelty. This made me lay aside my design, and consequently grow inattentive to differences, which had before struck me so much; and I indulged my rusticity without controul.

As soon as I was perfectly equipped, I was suffered to drink tea in the parlour with the gentlemen who came to the house; but was always directed to retire to my room very soon afterwards. Various reasons were given me why I should not stay; which passed upon me for the true ones, not having the

least notion that I was then only shewing to different people, that Mrs. Tent might know who would bid the highest for me.

After this manner of proceeding for a few days, my supposed mother told me, that Mr. Mastin, one of the gentlemen who had drank tea with us two or three times, had desired to come that afternoon to see me, without going into so much company; and therefore I should receive him in my own room.

I expressed my surprise at his preferring the conversation of such an ignorant unbred girl as myself to that of my sisters, who were so much more genteel and agreeable. She told me my ignorance was my charm; that he was delighted with my innocence, and declared he never saw so enchanting a young creature. "He is
" vast good," replied I, " to excuse
" my awkwardness." As this led us
into

into some discourse about my rusticity, I ventured to ask her “ If my sisters
 “ were not a little bold ; for seemingly
 “ to me they were sometimes a little
 “ bold and forward.” ‘ O child,’ answered my mother, ‘ it is natural
 ‘ you should think so, having been
 ‘ educated amongst vulgar people ; but
 ‘ their behaviour is that of persons of
 ‘ fashion : all such conduct themselves
 ‘ in the same manner.’ I begged pardon for my vulgarity ; and our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Mastin.

Soon after Mr. Mastin came, my mother was called out of the room, and we remained *tête à tête*.

Whether he had any doubt about the reality of my simplicity, or only an inclination to be convinced of it from my own mouth, I know not ; but he by questions drew from me an account of my whole life, from the first of my remembrance : which in-

deed was no difficult matter ; for I was qualified to talk on so few subjects, that I was very well inclined to make myself the topic of my discourse.

Mr. Mastin shewed so much compassion at any incidents in my relation which implied distress, and interrupted me by so many compliments and tender expressions, as pleased me much. There is great pleasure in being loved and pitied. They were both almost new to me ; and I felt myself much obliged to a gentleman, who, tho' so late an acquaintance, seemed so fond of me.

Mrs. Tent had sold this interview at a pretty good price, tho' Mr. Mastin had engaged to forbear shocking my vulgar notions, as she expressed herself, all at once ; and accordingly, when the stipulated time was expired, she returned to us, and not long after he took his leave, having obtained permission to wait on me the next day.

As

As soon as Mr. Mastin went away, my mother asked me how I liked him; and I replied "Desperate well: he has the winningest ways with him; surely, that ever gentleman had: so humble, that, would you believe it, he kiss'd my hand I dare say forty times, and seemed to love me as well as if I had been his own daughter. He called me the sweetest names! you cannot think how desperate engaging he was."

'Good gentleman!' cried Mrs. Tent, 'he is indeed mighty sweet-tempered and obliging, and I believe loves you much.' But she could not so well compose her countenance, as not to let a tendency to smile appear on it; which alarming my simple pride, as I thought she laugh'd at my folly, I asked what excited it? 'Only, my dear,' replied she, 'to think that your simplicity should have won the heart of a man, that so many ladies have been aiming at in vain.'

This

This answer pleased my vanity too well to leave me any doubt of its being the true reason of a smile, for which I was inclined to account in a manner less civil to myself.

CHAP.



C H A P. II.

For what one likes, if others like as well,
What serves one will, when many wills rebel?

POPE.

MR. Maftin came the next day, and was brought up into my room. As the liberty he had purchased was more extensive than the day before, he soon furprised me by his familiarity; and at laft I threatened him, that if he did not behave better I would tell my *mother*. He defired I would, and I fhould learn from her, that there was no impropriety in his behaviour.

Afhamed of the complaints I had to make, I did not immediately keep my word; but finding I could not make him defift, I told him, that “if
“ he did not mend his manners, I
“ would

"would go and tell all to my mother." He declared I should not leave him; but was very willing that I should ring the bell, and send for her.

I did accordingly; and when she came, I acquainted her with "what a horrid rude man Mr. Mastin was; and that he was so desperate bold and impudent, I would stay with him no longer; and desired she would scold him."

'What for, child?' said she, with a very discontented countenance, having flattered herself that the great prejudice I had expressed in his favour would have secured him an easier conquest; and that the shame I should feel for what I had done, and my desire of concealing it from her, would have been an additional proof of my simplicity, and greatly enhanced my charms. But finding her hopes frustrated, she had another resource. 'What should I scold Mr. Mastin for, child?' said she:

she: 'May not a man take what liberties he will with his wife?'

"With his wife!" interrupted I. "But how am I his wife? I never was so much as in the same church with him in all my life."

'What is that to the purpose?' replied Mrs. Tent: 'None but low country people make all that fuss about marriage. No other ceremony is required among people of fashion, but for a gentleman to tell a lady that he will marry her daughter; and then, if she consents, they become man and wife.'

"I do not know how that may be," said I; "but I am sure 'Squire Scrimshell's daughter was married at our church; and yet she was as fine a lady as hands and pins could make her; and he was a desperate fine gentleman too."

'Very likely,' replied my mother: 'Country Squires keep to old fashions; but people of quality have left off making such a bustle about it.'

"I can

“ I am sure,” added I, “ that I remember poor Susan Stokes was made to stand in a white sheet in our parish, because she had a child by a man to whom she had never been married in the church ; and they had been asked-out too, which is more than I and Mr. Mastin have been ; and she was called a sad wicked creature by all our neighbours for it. This I am certain of.”

‘ Very likely,’ answered Mrs. Tent ; ‘ but then I warrant you will find the man she had her child by had never agreed it with her mother.’

“ No indeed, I believe not,” replied I ; “ for her mother was sad and angry about it, and desperate grieved too, and said she should break her heart.”

‘ Well, you see the difference then,’ said Mrs. Tent. ‘ If I had not given my consent, you could not be Mr. Mastin’s wife ; that is the very thing which makes you two be married. You may take my word surely ; for you

‘ you see by your Susan’s mother what
 ‘ an affliction it is to a parent to have
 ‘ a daughter too free with a man she
 ‘ is not married to.’

“ That is true, indeed,” said I: “ but
 “ are we then truly and certainly mar-
 “ ried ? ”

‘ Most certainly,’ answered Mrs.
 Tent. ‘ Can you think I would tell
 ‘ you a lie ? I desire you will learn to
 ‘ respect your mother more : your
 ‘ duty is to believe every thing I say,
 ‘ and do every thing I bid you, or I
 ‘ shall disclaim you for my child : I
 ‘ will harbour no undutiful children.’

“ Dear mother, do not be angry,”
 said I, half crying ; “ I will be very
 “ dutiful : but how should I know
 “ we were married ? You did not tell
 “ me.”

‘ I was wrong there, to be sure,’
 replied she ; ‘ but I forgot to acquaint
 ‘ you with it, or indeed thought Mr.
 ‘ Mastin would tell you.’

“ Would you believe,” said I, “ that
 “ he never said so much as one word
 “ about

“ about it ; but howsomdever, if he
 “ had, I do not think I should have
 “ believed him.”

My scruples being satisfied, Mrs. Tent left us ; and I received Mr. Mastin’s visits regularly, seldom seeing any one else ; for I since learnt, that he had made my being kept out of all the company that came to the house one of the articles of his agreement.

This confinement was rather dull ; and I told my supposed husband, “ I
 “ wondered he would not take me
 “ home, for that I thought a wife was
 “ always to go to her husband’s house ;
 “ that I was sure Miss Scrimshell went
 “ with her husband the very day they
 “ were married.”

Mr. Mastin told me, that our mother had insisted on our making a pretty long stay with her ; and would not consent to our marriage on any other terms : for she said, she could
 not

not so soon part with a daughter she had so lately found.

I felt myself obliged to my *mother* for her love ; but had so great a notion of the pleasure of having a house and a coach of my own, that I could have excused her that proof of fondness.

The weather growing fine, Mr. Martin carried me out of town for a few days, to a place about twenty miles from London ; and by such little excursions reconciled me the better to staying at my *mother's* : But business called him to his country house, where he did not think proper to carry me ; and after many charges to my *mother*, to take care of his wife, which were strengthened by many private instructions, he left me, with excuses which, tho' he thought plausible, did not prevent my resenting his not suffering me to accompany him.

When

When Mr. Mastin had been gone about a week, Mrs. Tent brought up a gentleman to see me; and, after we had drank tea, left us. He soon grew very familiar and impertinent, and gave me great offence. I was sure I could not now be married again without my knowlege, as I had a husband already; so I expressed my anger very freely; and Mrs. Tent, who had gone no farther than the next room, came in to pacify me: and upon my complaining that he had attempted to be as familiar as if he was my husband, she told me there was nothing in that: ladies of fashion never scrupled such things; and that if Mr. Mastin had had any dislike to my admitting the courtship of others, to be sure he would not have left me behind him, when it was quite unnecessary to do so. She added, that I exposed my ill breeding and ignorance by not following the customs of the world, and doing like other people; and she was ashamed of such a vulgar-minded daughter; but she saw
 9 my

my low education had quite spoiled me; that none of my sisters would have made any such foolish objections.

I was indifferent as to the customs of people of fashion in this particular, having no sort of inclination to take advantage of it; for I found no temptation to imitate them. To have done so, I must have been intirely actuated by a desire to be genteel; which was not so strong in me, but that I opposed compliance from choice as strongly as I could have done from duty; and did not attempt to dispute the propriety with my *mother*, whose assertion I could not easily credit.

My visitor, at last, tired with my obstinacy, left me; but renewed his visits daily; and his sollicitations were always assisted by my *mother's* importunities, which much lessened my regard for her: but neither prevailing, she brought him up one night after I was in bed and asleep. Tho' I had little
sense

sense either of virtue or duty, conscience was not silent: I felt in my heart, that all my *mother* urged was false reasoning, tho' I was too ignorant and too silly to refute her. My tears shewed how far I was from being convinced by her; but she had learn'd to behold sorrow without feeling the least compassion, therefore was not to be moved by seeing me weep.

The first beginning of a crime is always the most grievous. Mr. Mastin did not return till near a week after; and this gentleman continued his visits during that time. I was extremely vexed at this circumstance, tho' not so wretched as at first. Virtue seems to act a little like a coward, and fly precipitately from those who commit one act of hostility against her.

Mr. Mastin's arrival was rendered the more agreeable to me for putting an end to the other gentleman's visits. Tho' my *mother* was lavish in her assurances

surances of the perfect retirement in which I had lived during his absence, and, as I afterwards learn'd, had protested I had not beheld the face of a man from the day he left me; yet Mr. Mastin was not intirely freed from the apprehensions which had possessed him, from the knowlege of her mercenary disposition, and thought he might better depend on my word than hers; therefore he asked me how far what she said was true.

The morning that Mr. Mastin returned, Mrs. Tent cautioned me against acquainting him with any thing that had passed, and added menaces to her prohibition; and enumerated all the ill consequences that might arise from my disobeying her in this particular.

This was a sufficient proof of the false light in which she had represented the inconstancy of which she had persuaded me to be guilty. I was not so very silly as to overlook this cir-

cumstance, and it had shocked me much : for tho' she had not quite convinced my very weak reason before, yet she had confounded it : but now truth broke thro' the cloud of falsehood which had overshadowed it, and shewed me my guilt in its strong colours. But it had not the effect she expected : for instead of forcing me to conceal what had passed, it made the sense of it so heavy a burden, that my heart was glad Mr. Mastin's inquiries gave me an opportunity of unloading it. I answered all Mr. Mastin's questions with a frankness and simplicity, which pleaded my excuse better than all the force of rhetoric ; but it exasperated him the more against Mrs. Tent. I never saw a man more agitated or distressed than he was. He was for some time quite outrageous ; and left me to vent his anger on my *mother* ; till, being tired with such expence of spirits, rather than really pacified, he returned to me much more composed, and able to enter into farther conversation,

versation, tho' it was still on the same subject.

After having heard all I had to say, he told me, that, grievously as the thought of what had passed tormented him, yet he must confess he deserved it; 'for, my dear Fanny,' continued he, 'if I had not given into the deceit practised upon you, and indeed become a principal party in it, I see by your frankness I should not have had any inconstancy to lay to your charge.' He then gave me a full account of the occupation of her whom I took to be my mother, of the reason of her so readily assuming the appearance of such, of her views in preserving the innocence and simplicity which I had brought with me to her house, of the falsity of her and his assurances of our being married; and informed me fully of my true situation.

I cried sadly, to hear I had neither husband nor mother; not so much out of any affection I retained for Mrs. Tent, whose vile conduct, thus fully displayed, extinguished all regard towards her, as, like Prince Prettiman, from a fear of being no-body's child at all; and I found at the same time I was no man's wife. To lose two such supports at one instant was a very melancholy circumstance. I sobbed out, that "I was afraid I had been very wicked." Mr. Mastin removed that apprehension with all the fallacious arguments with which he had long blinded his own reason and conscience; tho' they are too poor to appear even specious to a person of sense and thought, if passion was not the supreme judge, to whose sentence they appeal. They might perhaps have imposed a little time on my folly, had I been less prejudiced; but it was so much my present and most apparent interest to believe all he urged, that I gave him full credit.

Mr.

Mr. Mastin quieted my mind almost as easily as he had done my conscience; for by promising me an everlasting constancy, and a more than matrimonial love, as he expressed himself, I began to be less concerned that I was not married, and pretty easy whether I was any-body's daughter at all, as he engaged to take me from that house, and place me in one of my own. His passion was rather increased by absence than abated; and he was resolved to leave me no longer in the hands of a woman, who had so manifestly broke the trust reposed in her. That she did so, surely is less strange, than that a man of sense, who knew she lived by a constant practice of breaking thro' all the laws of religion or humanity, should expect she would scruple violating her word to one individual.



C H A P. III.

Love is not sin, but where 'tis sinful love :
There is a flame so holy and so clear,
 That the white taper *leaves* no foot behind.
 DRYDEN.

THE next morning, as soon as Mrs. Tent was up, Mr. Mastin told her he was resolved to take me away ; which she obstinately refusing to consent to, with all the rage of a mercenary wretch, who fears being deprived of what she esteems the most valuable property she has ; he, by threatening to have her brought to punishment, and her house suppressed, and by an offer of some money in case of a quiet acquiescence, at last prevailed, and carried me off.

I was now placed in a very pretty lodging, surrounded with every convenience of life, and introduced into
 diversions.

diversions which gave me both pleasure and surprize. Mr. Mastin kept me out of all infamous acquaintance; but got his tradesmen's wives to visit me; and they were so much more genteel than myself, that I could not wish for higher company; and their conversation wore off some of my rusticity, which ceased to please, when it was no longer a proof of my innocence; that great attraction, which very unnaturally charms those most, who are most desirous of destroying it.

I lived in this manner a year and a half, about which time Mr. Mastin fell in love with another woman, perhaps more engaging, but certainly more new than myself. However, he was too good-humoured to tell me this; but complaining our connexion was grown too like matrimony, to which he had a mortal aversion, he fairly acknowledged his resolution to break it off; but as he would not suffer me to be reduced to any distress, because his

passion for me was extinguished, he offered to recommend me to his sister, who wanted a servant to attend on her person; for which office I was grown genteel enough.

I had perceived the decay of Mr. Mastin's affection with some uneasiness, tho' without the bitter pangs which those feel at a lover's inconstancy, who are passionately in love with him. I had never conceived a passion for Mr. Mastin: his person and manner were agreeable; his age about forty; he had a great deal of complaisance and good nature, was generous, and fond of me; but had none of the tender delicacies of mind or behaviour which charm even the coldest heart. I might more properly be said to be pleased with him, than to love him; I was grateful, but not affectionate; my heart was a stranger to passion.

Tho' I had suffered but moderately at seeing an abatement in Mr. Mastin's
love,

love, yet I was shocked to think of parting with him; wherein perhaps the thought of relinquishing the pleasure and affluence in which I lived, and returning to a state of servitude, had not the smallest share. But as a disposition must be extremely selfish and interested that feels very poignant pangs when only convenience is concerned, I was consoleable; and had not so intirely forget my former condition, as not to think myself much exalted by that Mr. Mastin proposed to me.

After some expressions of concern, and more tears, I accepted his proposal without reproaches: for which he acknowledged himself obliged; promised to be always my friend; to contribute, as far as his convenience would permit, to the advancing of my fortune in any way that should offer; and assured me it would be a great satisfaction to him to have me placed where he should often see me.

Mr. Mastin recommended me in such a manner the next day to his sister, as secured me a favourable reception from her, who knew less of her brother's private vices than of his apparent good humour; for he was a man, who was by constitution free from every vice but one; and tho' without any fixed principle, was decent by inclination: this procured him the reputation of a generous, good-humoured, amiable man; and as such he was highly esteemed by Mrs. Lafew his sister, who was of a very different character.

Mrs. Lafew had an understanding superior to her brother's. She was bred up by an aunt, who had been fixed in the country for many years, whose life was spent in the exercise of every Christian virtue: she was the reliever of the poor, the comforter of the afflicted, a nurse to the sick, a prudent and faithful adviser to her neighbours, a guide to the young, a support

support to the aged, and an instructor of the ignorant. The character of Job in his prosperity had been the model on which she had formed her conduct; and she had copied it exactly. Every eye that saw her blessed her; and the ear that heard her witnessed to her.

Under the care of such a person, it is not strange if Mrs. Lafew, who was naturally of an happy disposition, acquired an uncommon degree of merit; especially as her aunt had always looked on the education of a niece, who was likely to enter into the world in a rank, where, by precept and example, she might be of extensive service, as one of her most useful employments.

Mrs. Lafew was naturally of a gentle disposition, which, by her aunt's example, was improved into the most engaging sweetness: she was modest and humble, sincere and open, and had found the art of being polite with-

out falshood. She had every moral virtue heightened by religion into every Christian grace. Her person was elegant, and her face handsome, and exactly corresponded with the delicacy of her mind.

Mr. Lafew made his addresses to her at a time that her aunt was sensible her dissolution was approaching; and therefore was particularly glad to marry her niece to a man of sense and character, who was passionately in love with her; and was the only man she had ever seen her niece listen to with complacency on that subject.

Mrs. Lafew had too much sincerity, and too just a sense of the intire confidence she ought to repose in her aunt, to conceal from her that she was disposed in Mr. Lafew's favour. The good old lady had the satisfaction of seeing them united before she died, and giving her blessing to a marriage, which promised much happiness to both parties.

This

This couple had been married about six years when I went to live with Mrs. Lafew. They had four children, who were so many additions to their felicity, being in every respect such as might be expected from the most amiable of parents.

Mr. Lafew is, I think, the handsomest man I ever saw; graceful in every motion, and polite and elegant in all his expressions. His heart is susceptible of the tenderest impressions, and every look expresses his sentiments in the strongest manner. When he married Miss Mastin, he loved her with all the passion she was so well formed to inspire; and what time had abated in the warmth of his affection, was compensated by the addition it had made to his esteem. If her person charmed less for being grown familiar, her virtues endeared her to him the more the longer he experienced them; and every day discovered some new excellence, or made those he was before acquainted

acquainted with shine with brighter lustre.

I do not imagine greater happiness can be enjoyed in the marriage state, than subsisted between this amiable couple when I entered their family; the pleasures of mutual love being increased by the joy they took in their lovely offspring, which they beheld with equal tenderness. My evidence in this case is not suspicious; for were it possible, I would think otherwise. This circumstance, by increasing my guilt, adds infinite weight to the burden of my conscience; which reproaches me hourly for being, like the serpent, the destroyer of happiness, and the cause of the fall of innocence; a crime which repentance can never expiate. But what bounds can be set to infinite mercy! That is the Foundation of all my hopes of pardon; and on what could I so properly rely?

Mrs.

Mrs. Lafew's sweetness of temper secured a favourable acceptance of every attempt to serve her ; and I found no difficulty in my place, but in answering such questions as she asked me in a manner consistent with the account Mr. Mastin had given of me, and the reasons for his interesting himself in my welfare. As he had invented a melancholy story of the death of my parents, decorated with many distressful circumstances, I found no other means to avoid betraying myself, but to appear so much affected with the recollection of my misfortunes, as rendered her humanity a bar to her examining me very narrowly about them. It was not difficult for me to seem distressed ; for whenever any part of this imaginary story was mentioned, I was so terrified with the fear of discovering the truth, that the agitation of my mind required but a small addition of art to excite the compassion of Mrs. Lafew.

Nor

Nor was Mr. Lafew devoid of pity. He seemed greatly touched with my distress; which he observed must, thro' so quick a sensibility as appeared in me on these occasions, be always great, tho' I generally had a sufficient command over myself to conceal it.

I am naturally fond of children; and none could be more engaging than Mrs. Lafew's; which attracted me much into the nursery. My mistress saw with pleasure my attachment to them; as every person receives gratification in finding others love those, for whom they feel great tenderness: and she likewise expressed her approbation at my chusing, young as I was, to be with the children rather than with the servants; to many of whom, it might naturally be supposed, my company would not be unacceptable.

By living so much in the nursery, I saw a great deal more of my master and mistress than I should otherwise have

have done: and as their good opinion of me rendered them particularly obliging, I felt both gratitude and love towards them. The children likewise were excessively fond of me, as all my leisure was dedicated to their amusement.

A gloomy night envelops the dying scene.

BLACK.

CHAPTER

CHAP.



C H A P. IV.

Shiv'ring death crept cold along his veins;
A gloomy night o'erwhelm'd his dying eyes.

BLACK.

MR. Maftin often came to fee his
fifter; and behaved with fuch eafy
natural humanity and regard towards
me, as would have difpelled fufpicion,
if any had been conceived: but none
of the family harboured a thought to
my difadvantage, tho' I had not Mr.
Maftin's command of countenance:
but the effect his prefence had on me
was attributed to bashful gratitude, not
to the fhame of guilt; and my miftrefs
fometimes feemed apprehenfive that
the obligations ſhe imagined I and my
family had to her brother, might have
awakened rather too tender a fenfibility
in my heart: but this excited her
compaffion, and not her anger. The
fafety

safety of my situation, and her great opinion of Mr. Mastin's honour and integrity, prevented her conceiving any fear of the consequences, which, with more opportunity, might arise from the prepossession she imagined I had in her brother's favour.

Mrs. Lafew's behaviour excited my gratitude and affection: but I confess I was still more sensibly affected both by my master's conduct and his perfections. - Nature had endowed him with very uncommon charms; and they made a strong impression on my heart, which was till then a stranger to love; indeed so ignorant about it, that I knew not the nature of my sensations. I had not imagined a possibility of my being in love with him; and therefore supposed every one, who knew him as well as I did, must be equally attached to him. I found I loved my mistress more because she belonged to him, than for her own merits; and, charming as their children

dren were, nothing endeared them so much to me, as the consideration that they were his. Every proof they gave of their affection to him was a new charm to me: but I did not receive the same pleasure from his fondness for them: I envied their title to his tenderness, and the great share they enjoyed of it; and could not forbear lamenting that I stood in none of those near and dear relations to him. But still I would not believe myself in love: want of hope stifled my passion in such a manner, that it might have deceived a person less ignorant of the human heart than myself.

I had lived near a year in this family, distinguished by the favour of my master and mistress, when the latter was seized with a scarlet fever, which immediately filled us all with fears for her valuable life. Her physician thought her in great danger; and my master seldom left the room, watching her with the utmost tenderness.

As

As soon as she was taken ill, she endeavoured to procure the nurse who used to take care of her in her lyings-in; but she being engaged, Mrs. Lafew expressed so great a dislike of her having one about her whom she knew nothing of, that I undertook to nurse her. She and Mr. Lafew were both afraid that I had not strength to go thro' so much fatigue; but were well inclined to be persuaded out of that fear, as it removed her apprehensions of a stranger.

In consequence of the office I had undertaken, I sat up every night with my mistress, and never left her but for two or three hours in the day-time, when my master would insist on my retiring to rest: but I allowed myself as little of this refreshment as possible, finding nothing recruit my spirits so much as being in her room in the day, as my master was then almost always there; and would often converse with me, and greatly recompense all my fatigue,

fatigue, by the strongest expressions of his gratitude for my care of his wife, and of the high esteem I had thereby given him for me.

If the smallest ray of hope had ever awakened in me an expectation of being regarded for my own sake, I might perhaps have felt more uneasiness than pleasure in thus gaining consideration only thro' the love Mr. Lafew bore another; but it was great gratification to me to obtain it by any means; and I increased it by my unaffected grief, when my mistress was pronounced to be in the utmost danger. My concern was real, but the cause mistaken; for I confess I felt my master's extreme affliction more sensibly than her danger. While he grieved, I was inconsolable; and he was charmed with such a proof of my affection for the great object of his.

The next day afforded us some comfort by her amendment, and her fever
gra-

gradually abated ; but she remained so weak, that her recovery was likely to be very slow.

Several of the servants caught the infection, and were extremely ill ; which gave my master an opportunity of shewing his humanity ; for he was frequent in his inquiries after them, and visited them daily, to see that proper care was taken of them. He, as well as myself, was in constant expectation of falling sick, and only solicitous to escape the ill effects we had reason to fear from our attendance, till Mrs. Lafew was sufficiently recovered not to suffer by our absence.

Our wishes in this respect were gratified : but as we grew easier on her account, we were alarmed from another quarter. Their eldest daughter, who was near four years old, tho' she had, as well as the rest of the children, been kept out of her mother's room for fear of infection, was taken ill, and

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the

the scarlet irruption soon after appeared. At first the physician had good hopes of her ; but the fifth day the irruption disappeared ; she was as cold, and almost as stiff, as marble ; and the doctor, who was immediately sent for, thought her in the agonies of death.

Mr. Lafew, who, from the time she was taken ill, had divided his time and care between her and her mother, and had wished me to do the same, having great confidence in my attachment to her, was shocked to the last degree, and knew not how to appear with any tolerable chearfulness before his wife ; who hearing more movement in the house than common, and her husband being absent, was apprehensive he was taken ill ; and so agitated with this notion, that I was obliged to go into the nursery, to desire he would repair to her, and quie ther apprehensions ; the only motive which could at that time have

have prevailed on him to leave his little daughter's bed-side.

The physician was then declaring the little hope he had of the child's recovery; but turning to the nursery-maid, told her, that if any thing could restore it, it would be going to bed to it, which by warmth might bring out the irruption again. The maid perceived that he applied to her for this purpose; but not chusing the office, which was attended with some danger, observed, that no-body could be expected to run such hazard of their lives; for there would be little chance of escaping the distemper in that case: And how dangerous it was no one could doubt, at a time that one of her fellow-servants lay dead of it, and another was dying.

My apprehensions were less, as my desire to save the child, and oblige the parents, was greater. I told the doctor I was very ready to try the experiment.

He begged then it might be done immediately ; and left the room for me to go to bed ; which I did directly, and took the child in my arms, laying her close to my bosom.

The doctor returned into the room, waiting the event of this experiment. In this situation Mr. Lafew found us, as soon as he could get clear from his wife without giving her any suspicions, and indulge his anxious impatience to know whether there was any alteration in his child. The physician acquainted him with what had passed, and the readiness with which I had undertaken to try this last and only thing he could think of for his little patient's relief. Mr. Lafew was excessively affected with this action ; so much, as to shed tears of gratitude and affection at this proof of my generous humanity, as he called it. His words did not express less than his tears : His acknowledgements were unbounded, and his praises of me so exalted, as shewed the great value

value he had set on the life I endeavoured to save. How nobly was I rewarded ! the deadly coldness of the poor babe had chilled me ; but the inexpressible joy I felt from seeing him so much obliged, and hearing myself placed so very high in his estimation, warmed my heart, and renewed the vital heat, which was so much suppressed by having almost a corpse in my arms.

In about half an hour, the child, whose eyes were fixed, began to shew some signs of life ; the stagnated blood seemed to flow again, and the doctor conceived hopes from his prescription. As for my master, he was almost distracted with joy ; he threw himself on his knees at the bed-side, and catching hold of one of my hands, embraced it ; called me " the preserver of his child, his best, his kindest friend : " In short, every thing that an unbounded transport could dictate.

Charmed as I was in being thus addressed, I was not free from fear lest the event should not answer the favourable symptoms which had thrown the tender parent into such ecstasies. But my apprehensions were vain; for the child revived more and more; and in a few hours the irruption began to appear again, which confirmed all our hopes.

The physician was so well pleased with his success, that he intimated a wish, that I would not leave the child for some time; and accordingly I continued in bed with it for two nights and days, tho' Mr. Lafew opposed it, expressing his fears of my catching the infection, and that he should at last lose his great benefactress, her who had bestowed the greatest blessing on him; and lose her by that infinite generosity to which he owed his darling child.

My mistress was so little used to my absence, that she soon inquired after me;

me; and being told I was taken ill, and put to bed, she intimated her concern with great humanity, as fearing my illness was the consequence of my attendance on her; But as soon as I was released from the child, I waited on her again.

I had the satisfaction of seeing Miss Lafew in a fair way of recovery, and of believing myself in a great measure the occasion of it. But my joy was soon troubled by Mr. Lafew's being seized with this cruel fever, which became so epidemical, that very few in the family escaped it.



C H A P. V.

For, oh! what damned minutes tells she o'er,
Who doats, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly
loves! SHAKESP.

MY mistress was greatly to be pitied.
It was impossible to conceal my
master's illness from her, tho' we did
not acquaint her how violent his fever
was. She was so weak, she could not
walk alone; and we were so continu-
ally alarmed with fresh appearances of
the irruption, that the physician, appre-
hending a relapse would be the conse-
quence of the least cold, would not per-
mit her to be carried out of her room;
which however we could not have pre-
vented, if we had not pretended that
my master declared himself so sen-
sible of the danger she would incur by
moving,

moving; that nothing would be so hurtful to him as her attempting it.

We were reduced to urge this in the strongest manner, and to invent a thousand messages from him, when he was incapable of sending any; for he soon became delirious; a circumstance which, if known to her, might have proved fatal; therefore we were obliged to pretend he was as well as the nature of the distemper would permit; the doctor thinking it adviseable to deceive her as long as was possible, in hopes Mr. Lafew might recover; and not let her suffer by her fears of an event, which, in her weak state, he thought her unable to support. His fever was indeed excessively violent; but the natural strength and goodness of his constitution gave his physician hopes that he might struggle thro' it.

The whole family was in affliction; but no one in it surely more to be pitied than myself; who, tho' overwhelmed

with grief, was obliged to go often to my mistress with a chearful countenance, and rack my imagination, which was tormented with a thousand dreadful phantoms, for pretended messages, and every other invention that might serve to persuade her he was in a better way. I do not think I could have supported so hard a task, if my mistress had not required me to be as much as possible in my master's room, from the great opinion she had of my care and good nursing; and therefore drove me from her presence as soon as ever I had made my report to her.

Mr. Lafew continued in this condition three days; the greatest part of which was spent by me in tears. He was seized at last with great sickness and fainting fits; and after lying a little time in appearance senseless, and quite without motion, while I was on my knees by his bed-side, weeping with an excess of agony, he opened his eyes, and his senses returning, after looking steadily

steadily at me for about a minute, asked me, with a broken voice, what was the matter; and, by calling me by my name, shewed me he had, at least in some degree, recovered his senses, and thereby gave me immediate consolation.

I thought there was a sort of presumption in having so strong an affection for one so much above me; therefore I could not prevail on myself to answer my master's question with entire veracity; yet I accounted so poorly for my grief, that he could not long doubt the cause. He inquired how long he had been ill; and found that he had been delirious. I could not give him a detail of his illness without fresh tears, which sufficiently explained the former. 'My dearest Fanny,' said he, 'my guardian angel, how can I ever reward such goodness?' Laying his hand on mine, which, without knowing what I did, I pressed to my lips, and wept over it. 'Tenderest, most

'enchanting creature!' cried Mr. Lafew, with a faint voice; and, taking my hand, returned the kiss, I had in a manner involuntarily given his.

This first exchange of careffes between us at once opened my eyes; the appearance of tenderness in him rendered me sensible how much I was in love. This sense made me retire from his bed-side; and, like our first parents, I was taught shame by want of innocence.

Mr. Lafew called me back, to ask me after the healths of his wife and children; and when his mind was made easy about them, he fell asleep, and did not wake till the doctor came; who was agreeably surpris'd to find his senses returned, and his fever much abated. We inform'd my mistress of his amendment; but still without letting her know how ill he had been. He kept his bed a considerable time longer, before his fever would leave him;

him; and my attendance continued; but without the pain which had at first accompanied it; for I saw him recover every day; and every hour brought me some proof of his regard and affection for me. But even this, great as the pleasure was, could not prevent me from beginning to sink under the fatigue of body, and anxiety of mind, which I had undergone: But while it was possible to keep up, I could not give way to what must deprive me of the sight of my master; and so great power had this consideration, that I continued the duties of my place till he was able to go into my mistress's apartment: For tho' he was the last of the two that was taken sick, he was well much before her.

When I was no longer able to conceal my illness, no doubt was made but that it was the consequence of the infection, and I was put to bed; where I continued four days without any appearance of irruption; and grew so

much better, that my disorder was judged only the effect of fatigue; which was really the case, and rest soon recovered me.

When I was first taken ill, no one could think it strange my master came to see me, as he made it his custom to visit every servant that was sick, when my mistress was not able to do it. To them he was humane; but to me he was tender. He appeared wretched, as he expressed himself, with the supposition, that after having so long escaped the infection, I should at last catch it of him. He would sit by my bed-side for an hour at a time, lamenting his ill fortune, and accompanying his words with the tenderest caresses. It was in vain that I assured him my disorder was only the consequence of fatigue, and that I felt no symptoms of the fever which had been so general: I could not quiet his apprehensions; which would have given me more concern, if I had not owed to them the plea-

pleasure of knowing that gratitude had begot a softer passion, and that I was tenderly beloved.

— Tho' Mr. Lafew had made so strong an impression on my heart, yet I am convinced the affection would never have become reciprocal without this unhappy illness; wherein I had so many opportunities of recommending myself to him, and of making myself an interest in his heart, by exciting his gratitude.

No other means, I am well persuaded, could have overcome his fondness for his wife. It is true, she had some claim too on the side of gratitude, for a series of actions arising from the most entire affection, and every proof of the most solid merit: But one circumstance made an essential difference; the virtues of a woman, whose person has been long in a man's possession, will excite his esteem; and, in Mr. Lafew's case, I might almost say his veneration; but

but the merit of a pretty woman, whom he has never possessed, gives rise to warmer passions. In one case, gratitude is the foundation of regard; in the other, of love.

Perhaps I might, with a great deal of truth, state the difference between myself and Mrs. Lafew more to her advantage, and attribute the rise of Mr. Lafew's passion for me as much to a persuasion of my frailty, as gratitude for the obligations he was pleased to think I had conferred on him. Had he been influenced only by the latter, his affection would never have led him beyond the bounds of virtue; but after esteeming me for actions which he thought the result of generosity and humanity, the knowledge of my love for him, which was too apparent, extinguished his esteem, while it excited his tenderness; and the affection which was founded on my apparent virtues, increased on the appearance of a weakness, which probably would change them

them all into vice. By falling lower in his opinion, I rose in his love: A change which should have mortified my pride, while it soothed my passion. But there is some degree of virtue in that pride which rises from an esteem for virtue; and I had none of either; for

*She must be humble, who will please:
And she must suffer, who will love.*

PRIOR.

Tho' sickness gave rise to all tenderness of intercourse between Mr. Lafew and myself, instead of ceasing with it, it increased daily; and continued undiscovered till I proved with child.

My mistress was of so open and generous a nature, that even love could not render her suspicious; and our intercourse remained for some time a secret to her; till the nursery maid, who had never forgiven my shewing more affection for Miss Lafew than she had done,

done, having discovered a private correspondence between us; imparted it to my mistress, who resented the calumny, as she called it, to the malicious girl; appeared very angry with her insolence, in daring to hint that her master was guilty of any fault; and reproved her, for throwing aspersions on a servant, who deserved so much from her and Mr. Lafew, that no distinction they could either of them shew her was equal to her merits.

The girl, piqued with so different a reception from what her meanness had made her expect, replied, "She did not know, indeed, how great Mrs. Fanny's merits might be; but she was sure she was with child."

This assertion startled my mistress, who at first really hoped all the girl said arose from envy; but she had herself observed an alteration in my complexion and countenance, and recollected some of my complaints, which bore

bore a resemblance to those of a breeding woman; but she shewed no emotion before her informer, except that of anger at her insolence, and commanded her to leave the room.

When Mrs. Lafew was left alone, she revolved over all the circumstances that occurred to her remembrance. Suspicion was now awakened, and she found sufficient reason to believe the account she had received was true. The attachment which Mr. Lafew had to me was so visible, that it had not passed unobserved by my mistress; but the generous confidence she had in his affection and integrity, led her to attribute it all to gratitude; and she admired him the more for that proof of his sensibility.

To attempt to describe what she felt on this occasion, as I learned it afterwards, would be too painful a task to me, who must all the time be filled with the most severe self-reproaches;
but

but it may be in some measure conceived, by whoever considers that her happiness consisted in her husband's affection for her; that from the tenderness and constancy of his love, she had enjoyed for some years the most perfect bliss this world can afford; a degree of felicity too great to be lasting here; and that at once she saw herself deprived of it. Nor had she the usual relief of anger; for he had behaved so well to her, even since his affection was placed on a new object, that she felt herself indebted to his humanity, and was sensible that a great degree of virtue was requisite to preserve him from a temptation which attacked him on the side of gratitude and generosity.

As soon as Mrs. Lafew could sufficiently compose her agitated mind, she made a pretence for calling me. While I remained employed in what she had set me to do, she asked me several questions, which she thought might tend to the satisfying her doubts: Nor
was

was she mistaken; for they appeared to me the result of suspicion; wherein I was confirmed, by an air of distress and inward agony, which overspread those features that used to express nothing but tranquil happiness and grateful love. This apprehension threw me into a confusion apparent in every thing I said; and I got out of her presence as soon as I possibly could: Nor did she wish to detain me; for I had so confirmed her doubts, that she was no less desirous of my absence, in order to have free liberty to indulge her grief.

The first time I saw Mr. Lafew afterwards, I communicated my apprehensions to him; but he assured me they were ill grounded; for he had just left his wife, whom he never saw more placid and affectionate, tho' much indisposed. This, I replied, was no confutation; for she was not of a disposition to break forth into rage and reproaches. He allowed the truth of
what

what I said; but thought it impossible for a woman of her frank and tender temper to conceal any thing that much affected her; besides, that, gentle as she was, she could not in such a case be so void of resentment, as to treat him with her usual affection.

I was glad to be persuaded out of my apprehensions, and helped to deceive myself. However, Mr. Lafew observed, that as the consequence of our mutual love could not long remain undiscovered, it was necessary I should leave the house; and he thought I could have no pretence so good as the declining state of my health.

This being agreed upon, the first time I could get courage to do it, I told my mistress that my health grew so bad, that, with the utmost concern, I saw it necessary to leave the best of mistresses, being no longer able to perform the duties of my place.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lafew distressed me, by replying, that I should not leave her on that account; for she thought herself too much obliged to me to require any service from me; and would take a servant, that I might live there without having any thing to attend to but my health; which should receive all the assistance the best advice and tenderest care could give it.

This would have been her real wish, had she believed me sincere; and her generous mind, unwilling to condemn me entirely, imagined infinite pleasure from my accepting this offer, as it would have removed her suspicions, and gratified her generosity.

I knew not what to say: Such goodness in one, from whom I so ill deserved it, increased my confusion; and for some time I could make no reply. A tear of compunction stole down my cheeks, but not unobserved, nor unaccompanied; for my mistress's eyes fol-

followed the example of mine, and overflowed with a mixture of grief and compassion for what she saw I suffered. At last, I stammered out, that I hoped change of air might do me good; and therefore, with her leave, would go to my friends in the country, for a time at least.

At this instant my master entered the room. My mistress informed him of what had passed: He pretended to agree with her in the offer she had made me; but with so ill a grace, and in so faint a manner affected to press me to stay with them, that a child must have seen thro' it. However, his wife pretended to think him in earnest; and when he said, that “ since I was
 “ resolved to try change of air, he
 “ hoped that, if I recovered my health
 “ by it, or found it of no use, in
 “ either case I would return to them,
 “ and afford them the gratification of
 “ contributing all in their power to the
 “ ease and welfare of one, to whom
 “ they

“ they owed the life of their child,
 “ and in great measure their own.”

The close of this sentence was pronounced with such warmth, and so lively an expression in his eyes, that had all he said been accompanied with the same air, his wife would almost have thought him sincere: But the change in his manner only served to shew her that he was so sensibly affected by those circumstances, that the mention of them entirely got the better of his confusion.



C H A P. VI.

To threats the stubborn sinner oft is hard ;
 Wrapt in his crimes, against the storm prepar'd :
 But when the milder beams of mercy play,
 He melts, and throws his cumb'rous cloak away.

DRYDEN.

AS soon as Mrs. Lafew had got another servant, I took a place in the stage-coach which went nearest the place I had said I was going to ; and having taken leave of my mistress the night before, and promised to return to her as soon as was consistent with my health, I went out in the morning at the proper hour ; but, instead of going to the coach, hastened to a house which Mr. Lafew had taken for me. It was very small, but clean and neat, and he had placed a servant there ready to attend me.

I could

I could not be so insensible to my mistress's goodness, as not to feel some remorse for having thus stepped in between her and felicity; and should have grown melancholy with the reflection, had not Mr. Lafew relieved me from it pretty soon, by coming to inquire how I liked my habitation; which he was impatient to know, as well as to shew me the necessity of the restraint he laid himself under some days before I left his house, fearing that I might attribute his caution to coldness.

As I now enjoyed a great deal more of his company, and that without alarms or apprehensions of discovery, I grew still fonder of him, and happier in my situation; consequently, thought less of the injury I had done his wife; for when our own hearts are at ease, we are apt to attend too little to the sufferings of others.

A very beautiful boy was added to our society, and compleated my happiness.

ness. I am afraid I must not apply that word to us both : Mr. Lafew was too sensible of his ingratitude to the best and most lovely of wives, to be satisfied with the part he acted. When he seemed most delighted with me, he would utter a self-reproaching sigh; and often told me, that tho' he still retained for his wife the strongest affection that the most perfect esteem could give, yet he should be glad never to see her; for he could no longer behold her without the greatest uneasiness, knowing how little he deserved her goodness. I am afraid it is not uncommon for people to attempt to make themselves easy by removing the sense of their guilt, rather than by relinquishing their crime; and the only consequence of their concern for having done an injury to another, is their adding farther injuries to that which the recollection of gives them pain.

Mr. Lafew flattered himself, that his lady was ignorant of his connexions

with me ; and it was not my interest to express my suspicion of the contrary, any more than it was for my peace to believe it ; since I could not reflect on the probability of it without great uneasiness. Mr. Lafew often spoke with concern of the bad state of her health, and the effect it had on her spirits ; but as she never hinted at any apparent decay in his affections, nor at any suspicions of his inconstancy, or ever appeared the least out of temper ; but when he had been the longest absent from her, received him with the greatest tenderness and complacency ; he thought it impossible but she must be intirely ignorant of the whole transaction.

I wished to be as well convinced of the truth of Mr. Lafew's opinion, as he was : But tho' I was sensible such a degree of patience was far above me, yet I had so high a veneration for Mrs. Lafew, that I could not think her incapable of it ; and therefore had some

painful doubts and fears on the subject; which, however, I concealed from Mr. Lafew, lest his affection for his wife, if it had compassion on its side, might get the better of his passion for me.

I had lived above a year in this manner with Mr. Lafew, when he was obliged to go into Cumberland, to look after an estate he had there, his steward being just dead. This separation gave me great concern, tho' I received all possible alleviation from a constant and frequent correspondence by letters. But before he had been gone a month, I was seized with a fever.

When I found myself extremely ill, I sent for the physician who attended Mr. Lafew's family while I nurs'd them; he being the only one of the faculty of whom I had any knowledge, and his conduct had given me a confidence in his skill. Of his behaviour to myself I was not long a judge; for the fever affected my head so much, that

that I became delirious the second day of his attendance, and remained so for above a week; when, recovering my senses, the first object I beheld was Mrs. Lafew at my bed-side.

There was not perhaps a sight in the world which could have shocked me so much; for what is so painful, as to look on those whom we have injured! I hid my head from her benign countenance, and was ready to die with shame and remorse. It threw me into an agitation of mind and body, which alarmed her, as well as those who attended me; tho' no one but herself guessed the reason of it. She endeavoured to compose my mind, by every soothing expression and kind attention the most perfect humanity could dictate; which drawing a flood of tears from my eyes, quieted my spirits; and a day or two made great amendment in me.

E 3 I then

I then began to enquire of Mrs. Lafew to what I owed her charitable visits; and received the following account in answer.

One of Mrs. Lafew's children was, at the time I fell ill, under the care of the physician I sent for; and he went there directly from me the second day of his attendance. In the course of the conversation he had with Mrs. Lafew, he told her, that he had just left the young woman, who had so carefully and tenderly nursed her and her family, when they were so severely afflicted with a scarlet fever; adding, that my behaviour then had given him such a regard for me, that he was shocked at my being in so bad a way.

Mrs. Lafew hereupon inquired particulars; and found he thought me in the utmost danger. She asked him, whom I had about me; to which he replied, nobody but a very young girl, and a very ordinary servant, who let him

him in: He added, that he wished he knew where my relations lived; for better attendance was necessary, and he must be obliged to seek out for a nurse for me himself, tho' he much disliked the office, if he could meet with no one else who would take that care.

Mrs. Lafew, after a little pause, said, she would save him that trouble; assuring him she would go directly to my house; for she was much concerned in my debt. After informing her of the place of my abode, he left her, and she came to me, whom she found intirely delirious, and as ill attended as my doctor had represented.

My little boy was just beginning to walk, and was then going round the room with the assistance of the chairs, taking hold of each as a support in his little progress; but at the sight of a stranger, tottered to me, as to one by whom he expected to be defended from all danger; for a new person was

a very formidable sight to him, being naturally of a shy disposition, and that increased by not seeing any variety of people; which the retired life I led prevented.

Mrs. Lafew was variously affected with the sight of my child; she could not behold a descendant from Mr. Lafew, and one too who resembled him extremely, without tenderness: but when she considered him as a proof of her husband's attachment to another woman, and his inconstancy to her, it shocked her severely; however, her tender sentiments prevailed, and the distress the poor babe appeared in, at meeting with a total disregard from *her* whose great pleasure it had been continually to fondle him, moved Mrs. Lafew's compassion. I was then so void of sense, as not to know even my dear child, tho' I had preserved that knowledge after all other had left me.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lafew endeavoured to prevail on the poor boy to come to her, and by all the bribery of sugar-plums and sweet-meats, prevailed in her next visit. She engaged her own nurse to attend me, and never failed coming every morning and evening to see that all possible care was taken; and would often sit a considerable time by me, before I recovered sense enough to know her.

She saw two letters on the table, which came by different posts after my delirium began: She perceiving by the hand they were from Mr. Lafew, but unopened, gave them to my maid, to keep till I asked for them, and then to deliver them.

I had not long recovered my senses before I enquired if there were no letters for me; and those which were hereupon given me were my best cordials; tho' the last expressed an uneasiness at not hearing from me, which put me under a great difficulty; and the next

post increased it, by bringing me much more to the same purpose. I was so weak, that to hold a pen was an utter impossibility; my maid could not write; my doctor, or my nurse, I could not trust, as they might inform Mrs. Lafew of my request. This really distressed me greatly: I could not tell how to support the vexation of prolonging the extreme anxiety which Mr. Lafew, by his letters, appeared to feel; nor could I suspect the truth of his expressions; and yet I was incapable of removing them.

From this dilemma I was delivered by the last person from whom I expected such a service. Mrs. Lafew having privately inquired, whether I had asked for my letters, and being answered in the affirmative, and that I had received another by that day's post; she told me, that she understood I had had my letters, which she ordered to be put safely by for me, till I was able to read them.

This

This implying an intimation that she had seen her husband's letters, and so generously left them untouched, filled me with confusion, and painful remorse, which drew some tears from me. Mrs. Lafew, who meant to comfort rather than afflict me, and thought me then able to bear the subject, with the greatest gentleness, and even an air of tenderness, desired me not to be shocked at what she had said; for she meant not to reproach me; on the contrary, her design was to relieve me. She had been reflecting on the uneasiness Mr. Lafew must be under at not hearing from me, as she plainly saw, by the frequency of his letters, how constant our correspondence was; and she could not support the notion of his suffering any pain, tho' perhaps she did not seem the person to whose pity he was best intitled; but that, whatever she endured, she could not let him feel an uneasiness, from which it was in her power to relieve him.

The last part of this sentence was uttered with many tears, which affected me beyond expression; and I was so unable to guess her meaning, that I could make no answer.

Mrs. Lafew then asked me, if Mr. Lafew expressed no apprehensions at having been so long without hearing from me; and finding me unwilling to reply, she intreated me to tell her plainly; and, to encourage me to do so, took hold of my hand, assuming a smiling countenance, and an air of affection, while her eyes ran over with tears.

I should have thought myself unpardonably ungrateful to a goodness I had already too much offended, if I had any longer resisted her intreaties; and frankly confessed, that Mr. Lafew expressed more anxiety on my account, than such a wretch as I was could deserve from any one. Nor did I herein affect humility; Mrs. Lafew's superior

superior conduct had so truly humbled me, that I saw myself the vilest and most despicable of the creation.

Mrs. Lafew replied, that she knew the strength and tenderness of his affections too well to doubt of it; and, as I was incapable of writing, she would, if I chose it, disguise her hand in such a manner, that he should not discover it, rather than Mr. Lafew should continue to suffer by his anxiety, or that I should expose his failings by employing any other person to write for me.

This offer surprized me extremely. How few women are there, who would have thought with pleasure on the pain their husband suffered from his love for another? Nor are there many more, whose delicacy, in regard to their husband's honour, would have induced them to undertake such an office. It is easy to imagine I was not backward at accepting an offer which gave so much

much relief to my mind, in affording me a means of abating Mr. Lafew's uneasiness; and I was under no apprehensions of his discovering the hand I employed, as no resemblance of his wife's could possibly persuade him that it was really hers.

Mrs. Lafew desired me to dictate to her. When I had such a secretary, my expressions could not fail of being much constrained: I could not ask her to transmit any tender sentiments from me to her husband; therefore I gave her no very tedious task; only desiring her to thank him for his kind anxiety; to let him know the occasion of it, and of the great amendment of my health; excusing the conciseness of my letter, on being obliged to the assistance of a friend, for the power of giving him that short information about me. This, I hoped, would account for the cold answer I returned to three most affectionate letters, which, because of the tenderness of their contents,

tents, I did not shew to Mrs. Lafew ; nor did she hint at a desire to see them. I believe she was too prudent to wish it; for her sensibility on that subject appeared plainly in the tears which trickled down her cheeks all the time she was writing for me; for all her endeavours could not conceal them. But notwithstanding the pain it gave her, she repeated it every post-day, till I was able to hold my pen.



C H A P. VII.

——— Heav'n has but
 Our sorrow for our sins, and then delights
 To pardon erring man : Sweet mercy seems
 Its darling attribute, which limits justice ;
 As if there were degrees in Infinite ;
 And Infinite would rather want perfection,
 Than punish to extent.

DRYDEN.

I Several times asked Mrs. Lafew,
 how it was possible for her to for-
 give the injury I had done her, as she
 seemed to do ; and not to hate, instead
 of pitying me for any thing I suffered.
 She declined answering me, till I was
 much recovered ; and then, on my
 repeating the question, replied, “ I
 “ will not pretend to say, that if I had
 “ seen you in no other light than the
 “ object of my husband’s tenderest af-
 “ fections,

“ fections, and the cause of his incon-
 “ stancy, I could have thought you
 “ more worthy of my compassion
 “ than of my resentment; but as gra-
 “ titude had taught me to love you
 “ enough to be sincerely interested in
 “ your welfare, my own misfortune
 “ did not engross all my thoughts. I
 “ considered what I suffered was but
 “ for a time. You indeed seemed to
 “ have a present advantage over me;
 “ but how dreadful were the threat-
 “ ened consequences! The short tri-
 “ umph of a few years must, if un-
 “ repented of, be succeeded by eternal
 “ misery. The heart must be very
 “ hard, which, in such a situation,
 “ could be void of compassion for one,
 “ who possibly might be on the brink
 “ of the most dreadful eternity, but
 “ from whom, at least, it could not be
 “ far distant; for the longest life is
 “ short while passing, and still shorter
 “ in reflection.

“ I ac-
 “

"I acknowledge", continued she,
 "that Mr. Lafew was the more im-
 "mediate object of my concern, as
 "he was most dear to me; and so
 "great have been my apprehensions
 "for him, that I can with truth say,
 "I have suffered much more on his
 "account than on my own. All my
 "worldly happiness is indeed come to
 "its period; but death promises me
 "certain relief; it may for some years
 "delay its healing balm; but at last
 "it will not fail of yielding me a cer-
 "tain cure. But this unavoidable
 "event opens to the adulterer an hor-
 "rid scene; and he, whose consci-
 "ence has inflicted already frequent
 "pains, will find, that small is the
 "part which guilt has thus antici-
 "pated, in comparison of those to
 "which he will then be awakened."

This last sentence was interrupted
 by many tears: She fell into such ex-
 treme agonies of mind, that it was
 long before she could grow sufficiently
 composed

composed to resume the subject; nor was I capable of soliciting her to continue it; for her words had filled me with a horror I had never before felt. However, as soon as Mrs. Lafew was able, she thus proceeded.

“ Tho’ you had had but a small
 “ share in my thoughts before, and I
 “ hoped for some mercy for you on
 “ account of the greatness of the temp-
 “ tation (for I was convinced no
 “ common share of religion and vir-
 “ tue could resist Mr. Lafew’s supe-
 “ rior power to charm); yet, when I
 “ heard that you were on the brink of
 “ appearing before HIM, whose most
 “ sacred laws you had violated, I per-
 “ ceived, that what I had called hopes
 “ in your favour, arose only from my
 “ indifference to you, which the near-
 “ ness of the danger removed; and
 “ my compassion for you was strongly
 “ excited by your condition. Every
 “ moment threatened you with a
 “ dreadful change; a removal from
 “ a state

“ a state of worldly pleasure to an
 “ eternity of endless pains. How
 “ great an object of pity was the per-
 “ son now become, whom I had
 “ sometimes been tempted to envy,
 “ till I reflected on the greater eligi-
 “ bility of my own situation, with
 “ mortified affections, disappointed
 “ love, but a clear conscience, than
 “ that of one, whose pleasures must
 “ be embittered with self-reproaches
 “ here, and punished with unspeak-
 “ able torments hereafter!

“ Who could forbear to compas-
 “ sionate a person in your deplorable
 “ condition? Certainly not one who
 “ had experienced the good effects of
 “ your humanity. I immediately re-
 “ solved to see that all possible care
 “ was taken of you, and to attend
 “ you assiduously, tho’ I could do
 “ little more than pray for your reco-
 “ very and repentance. Without the
 “ latter, the first could be no benefit
 “ to you; it would be adding only a
 “ greater

“ greater weight of guilt to your past
 “ crimes. But that I must leave to
 “ HIM, who alone can change the
 “ heart: My business was to see that
 “ all human means were tried to pre-
 “ serve your life, and thereby give
 “ you time to expiate your offences by
 “ penitence.”

Tho' I had never heard the actions
 I had been guilty of represented in so
 serious a light, yet conscience, now for
 the first time seriously awakened, bore
 witness to the truth of all Mrs. Lafew
 asserted. It is not easy to imagine how
 much I was affected with what she
 had said. I was too much agitated to
 pursue the subject; but the next day
 I asked her, If she was not peculiarly
 serious in her way of treating what I
 had hitherto heard called by no worse
 name than that of gallantry.

Mrs. Lafew, upon my putting this
 question, told me, “ that, whatever
 “ names might be given to our actions
 here,

“ they would not be judged hereafter
 “ by fallacious appellations appropri-
 “ ated to them in this world: That the
 “ bible was given us as the rule of our
 “ faith, and guide of our actions, by
 “ Him who would judge us according
 “ to our conformity to it; and there-
 “ fore from it we must learn the true
 “ nature of them.”

She then began with a summary account of the Christian revelation, and instructed me in all the fundamentals of religion, of which I had before but a scanty knowlege. From this time she passed every day with me; and read, and, where my ignorance rendered it necessary, explained, the Scriptures to me. In them I did indeed find my own condemnation; and was so terrified at my situation, that Mrs. Lafew feared she had brought me to despair, rather than to repentance. She referred me for hope to the same book which had deprived me of it; and, by producing to me all the passages which

promised

promised forgiveness to repenting sinners, she convinced me, from the whole tenor of the New Testament, that I was within the reach of mercy.

I stood too much in need of it to slight the call, and determined no longer to continue my course of life. Apprehensions of the consequences of my love for Mr. Lafew abated my passion; and my affection led me to be as desirous of his reformation as of my own. Could I have overcome the sense of my guilt as an adultress, I felt myself so greatly indebted to Mrs. Lafew, for her care both of my temporal and eternal welfare, that I could not have continued in a conduct which must render her unhappy.

My resolution was firmly fixed; but I considered Mr. Lafew was absent; I feared the sight of him might again awaken all my frailty; and therefore wished to put a relapse out of my power.

power. For this reason I rejected all Mrs. Lafew's offers of settling me in a state of ease and plenty at a distance from any abode of theirs. I feared myself; and was apprehensive that Mr. Lafew might be displeased with his wife, if he thought she was privy to my concealment; and might think me grown rather indifferent than penitent, and more prevailed upon by the temptation of ease, than by a sense of my crime.

As I was no enemy to employment, and wished for a society which should confirm me in my resolutions, I determined to enter into this Asylum; Mrs. Lafew engaging to take care of my boy, and to bring him often to see me.

My letters had from the first of this alteration in my mind, borne the signs of it. Melancholy took the place of the passionate expressions with which they used to be filled; and I frequently intimated my compunction for our past way

way of life. When I had settled my plan, I wrote an account of all that had passed, and the effect it had had upon me; intreating him not to grieve for the loss of me, but for the danger in which his eternal welfare had been involved with mine. I expatiated on the great obligations we both had to Mrs. Lafew; informed him of the perfect knowlege she had had of our intercourse, almost during the whole course of it; and was not silent on the great merit of her behaviour on the occasion. I added, that I had committed our dear child to her care, and was resolved to devote the rest of my life to penitence.

This letter, as soon as finished, I dispatched to him. With what money I had, I defrayed my lodgings, and paid off my servants; and, after taking what I hoped would prove but a short farewell of my darling infant and Mrs. Lafew, I came hither, and was most charitably accepted.

This lady is the person who has been twice to visit me; and the boy which came with her was the object of my tenderest love, tho' the offspring of my crime. Mr. Lafew had been in town above a fortnight before she last came; and from her I had the pleasure of learning that my letter had affected him as I wished; that he had begged her pardon for his past injurious conduct, in the most frank and affectionate manner; and tho' he spoke of me with unaffected kindness and regard, yet was so far from asking to what place I had retired, that he desired her not to inform him, lest in some weak moment he might endeavour to see me.

To complete my satisfaction, she assured me, that she had never known him more affectionate in his behaviour to her than since his return out of the north; only it was mixed with a degree of veneration and respect, which gave her pain to receive from a husband

band whom she so tenderly loved, and whose past lapses she so cordially forgave. The excellent lady added, that my child was beloved by both, and treated, in every respect, as their other children.

What more can be wanting to my felicity ! My temporal concerns are all supplied in the most perfect manner ; and I have every means of providing for my future welfare. I may appear blameable for taking advantage of this charity, when I had the means of subsisting what may be called better without it ; but I hope I am not so bad a worker, but that I shall rather be a benefit than an expence to the society ; and if not, I trust in their boundless humanity for pardoning my having recourse to it for preserving me from a failure in virtue, as readily as if my motive had been to obtain relief from necessities of a still less pernicious nature, the want of subsistence.

Whatever censurers Fanny may meet with, she was in no danger of being blamed by her companions; who had all been greatly edified by her industry and piety, since she came into the house, and were so pleased with the mildness and sweetness of her behaviour, that they could not blame any motive which brought her thither; where, perhaps, she was the only one who was induced to apply to that asylum merely from penitence, unaccompanied with any distress of circumstances; tho' many, who were led by other motives, have, when instructed in the true nature of their crimes, become as penitent.

CHAP.



C H A P. VIII.

Love is the pleasant frenzy of the mind:
 And frantick men, in their mad actions, show
 An happiness, which none but madmen know.

DRYDEN.

THE next person called upon to communicate the particulars of her *eventful* life, was a woman of above thirty years of age, in whose face appeared beauty in decay. Her features were extremely fine; but her eyes, which had been naturally languishing, were now become languid; and her complexion shewed the ill effects of time and irregularity, and of the pernicious arts made use of to restore a fictitious bloom, when the true one is passed. Her person was less

impaired; she still preserved a genteel air, accompanied with some degree of dignity, which her manner and behaviour did not contradict. It is generally allowed, that vanity requires more sollicitation than diffidence: It is no wonder then if this society, who had much to humble them, and nothing whereof they could be vain, did not resist the general agreement and desire. They might indeed plead a title to honour, wherein few in more respected ranks of life can rival them, the merit of being sensible of their errors, and penitent for them: But such real desert can be no subject for vanity; on the contrary, it is both the consequence and the cause of the truest humility.

The person I have been describing, as the next who was to be her own biographer, was ready to obey the desire of her companions, as soon as they intimated it, and proceeded in the following terms.

My

My father was a country gentleman, who had impaired his fortune in his youth; but prudence came to his relief before his ruin was completed; and having married a woman with a tolerable fortune, and a great deal of economy, he settled intirely at his country seat.

My mother's extreme good housewifery might have restored his estate to its former bulk, had she not frustrated all her care by being extremely prolific; insomuch that breeding and saving went hand in hand, in such due proportion, that all we could expect from our parents was mere subsistence.

There were so many of us, that my mother had sufficient employment in the necessary care of our bodies; nor could my father afford more time for the cultivation of our minds than was requisite to teach us to read and write, and that to no great degree of perfection.

We had several neighbours, with whom we lived on good and equal terms; tho' the charges of so large a family rendered us unequal to them in opulence. One of these was a gentleman, who had two sons; the eldest was on his travels when I was first admitted into company, which was in my sixteenth year; for my mother very prudently kept us in the nursery till that age, to lessen the expence of our cloaths; which, if we had appeared to visitors, must have been more genteel than otherwise was necessary.

This neighbour, whose name was Turnham, had his second son at home; a youth little more than two years older than myself. His person was agreeable, and his manner very insinuating. His father had designed him for the study of the law; but soon perceived it was too laborious a profession for so volatile a genius.

The

The young gentleman had been guilty of some juvenile excesses; and when he found his school-master intended to punish him, he ran away from school; and his father could not prevail on him to come home, but on a promise of never sending him thither again. This indulgent parent then put him under the tuition of the curate of his parish; but found it impossible to fix him to any sort of study, and that his head ran entirely on the army.

When Mr. Turnham found that it was impossible to make his son apply to any thing serious, he thought it most prudent to gratify his wish, and bought him a commission.

Young Turnham had just acquired the title of captain, and a red coat, when I first knew him; two distinguishing circumstances, which made me look on him as a very fine gentleman;

man; and I being then very young, and in the full bloom of youth, attracted his notice, of which I soon became sensible, by his assiduities where-ever I met him; and as he was idle both by profession and inclination, he had nothing to do but to visit his neighbours; and contrived to know our motions so well, that he generally met us where-ever we went, pretendedly by chance; but he took care I should be better informed of the cause, to which I owed a circumstance highly agreeable to me.

Captain Turnham's vivacity and natural good breeding made him much carested. His conversation enlivened every company he came into; and the young women were all my rivals, each endeavouring to attract the man, who appeared to them the most agreeable in the country: But I had the satisfaction of seeing they were all unsuccessful; and found my vanity most pleasingly flattered, in being preferred to

so many, who omitted no means of gaining the heart which voluntarily gave itself to me.

Captain Turnham took all opportunities of drawing me aside from the company; nor was I backward in complying with his inclination in this request, since the short conversations thus obtained yielded much greater satisfaction than mixed company could give. On these occasions his vivacity was changed into tenderness, and he became more pleasing to me, by the thing that would have rendered him less entertaining to others.

As I had more sincerity than art, he was not long a stranger to the return my heart made to his affection. From this knowledge arose a correspondence by letters, which was very diligently carried on by us both, wherein we communicated our tenderest sentiments; and I never failed giving him

information of every opportunity of meeting me; nor did he ever neglect the summons.

But the most pleasing of all our interviews, were a few stolen meetings in a neighbouring wood, whither he generally went every morning by five o'clock, and staid till seven; and whenever I could possibly get clear of the rest of my family any part of those two hours, I went to him, and staid as long as I durst venture to be absent from home.

I paid dearly for this pleasure, by the constant perturbation of my mind, which was ever anxious for fear of disappointment, and grievously mortified when I was prevented from meeting him, which was frequently the case; for we judged it necessary to be extremely secret in our mutual passion, tho' our actions and our views were wholly innocent; but we were both so entirely dependent on our parents,

and

and so destitute of fortune, that we could hope for the liberty of seeing each other only from their ignorance of the strength of our mutual attachment. In this wood we interchanged a thousand vows of eternal love, with all that profuseness wherewith they are lavished by boys and girls, who neither know the nature of their own hearts, nor of the passion they profess. Here we formed various schemes for our future union, all founded on the hopes of my lover's preferment, which our wishes represented to us as not far distant.

I had no confidante at home: I had two sisters and three brothers older than myself, and two brothers and one sister younger; but my elder sisters were so much older, that they tyrannized over me as a child, and my younger sister was an infant. Most of my brothers were placed where youth may be commendably and commodiously boarded, lodged, taught, &c.

for the moderate sum of ten pounds a year; and those who had outgrown the age for these cheap seminaries, were apprenticed to such businesses as they were designed to follow, except my eldest brother; and it being thought proper that the heir of the family should be able to write and read, and have a gentleman's education, he was sent to a school where learning was not sold so great a pennyworth, and afterwards to the University, where he was during the time Captain Turnham made his addreses to me.

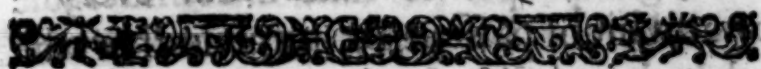
I believe the air of intrigue adds a pleasure to courtship: Ours had this recommendation in a supreme degree; and perhaps, had we received permission from our parents, it might have diminished our passion. We were of an age for romance, and were delighted with every circumstance that bore the air of it. An allowed affection, like an established religion, is apt to turn the warmth, which in one case
is

[III]

is called passion, in the other zeal, into lukewarmness. In most cases opposition is as necessary to preserve mental fire in its full blaze, as air is for the more material kind; and I have seen that love, which, while approved by all, has burnt faintly, like smothered embers, blown into such a flame by unexpected opposition, that it has almost consumed every principle, and turned the whole mind into a general conflagration.

The attachment between Captain Turnham and myself was not wholly unobserved; but it was looked upon only as a coquetry on both sides; for as there was no apparent advantage on either, our parents were not very ready to take alarm; and we found so much pleasure in secrecy, that we took great care to preserve it; whilst we continually complained of the constraint we were under as the heaviest misfortune, and of the distant prospect of our marriage, which we really felt very severely,

severely, in the language of despairing lovers, who did not find that every vow, which passion or suspicion ever invented, never to marry any other person, or not to prove false to their professions, was a sufficient gratification.



CHAP. IX.

Interest is the most prevailing cheat;
 The sly seducer both of age and youth;
 They study that, and think they study truth:
 Where interest fortifies an argument,
 Weak reason serves to gain the will's assent;
 For souls already warp'd receive an easy bent.

DRYDEN.

IF the necessity of concealment helped
 to raise our passion to so great an
 height, what addition did it not receive
 from the open opposition which broke
 out in the second year of its existence!

The cause of this event was a
 gentleman, who came to make a visit
 to one of our neighbours. His name
 was Merton: He confessed but fifty
 years of age, tho' he appeared in every
 respect above threescore. Whether he
 thought

thought proper to sink a considerable number of his years, or whether the debauched life he had led gave him the infirmities and appearance of a more advanced age, I cannot pretend to say; but, by chusing rather to have the latter believed, he rendered those defects nauseous, which otherwise one should only have pitied.

Mr. Merton, in short, was a battered rake, whose body was worn out, but his mind unreformed. While his person exhibited all the imperfections of old age, he affected the dissolute manner and loose conversation of a thoughtless boyish rake; whereby, instead of inspiring that respect which we feel at seeing a man full of age and honour, who, like the ruins of a noble edifice, is rendered more respectable by time, and receives new charms from his decay, Mr. Merton was the most contemptible, as well as most nauseous, of mankind.

This

old This gentleman my ill fortune gave me for a lover; and so combustible was his heart, at an age least proper, that it took fire the first time he saw me, and burnt with such violence, that he could not rest out of my presence. The gentleman whose visitor he was, happened to be a great friend of my father; and thinking it would be happy for him to dispose of a daughter to a man of so large a fortune as Mr. Merton was possessed of, he encouraged him in his passion.

Mr. Merton was sufficiently sensible of his own infirmities, to think a nurse a necessary appendix; and tho' he had been well acquainted with our sex, was weak enough to fancy a girl of seventeen a proper person for a wife. This consideration, joined with the passion he had conceived for me, soon determined him to make his addresses.

This was the only circumstance which could have rendered him more odious.

odious to me than he was before. My mind was the very essence of romance; could fancy a state of perfect bliss in more barren plains than those of Arcadia with my Strephon; could even imagine scenes of happiness in wilds and deserts; and with sincerity have addressed him as Belvidere does Jaffier; and have promised not to forsake him, tho'

*the bare earth should be our resting place;
Its roots our food; some cliff our habitation;*
that I would.

*Have made my arm a pillow for his head,
And watch'd him till the morning.*

Such was then the extravagance of my notions; the most unfit state for the contrary madness, which, as ignorant of the power of riches as I was of that of love, fancies that wealth, however encumbered, must give happiness.

It would, in the disposition I have been representing, have been very difficult to have persuaded me that Mr. Merton could confer any benefit on
me

me by becoming my husband ; and he found I listened to him with so little complacency, that he thought he should find a shorter way of arriving at the completion of his wishes by applying to my father ; and accordingly changed his addresses from me to him.

Mr. Merton, in this change of his measures, certainly judged well. My father received his proposal with pleasure, and my mother with joy : For an offer to take a daughter off their hands, without requiring any fortune with her, was an irresistible argument for their consent ; and however distasteful he might be to me, such a lover was sure to have many charms for them.

Mr. Merton in nothing shewed so true a knowledge of himself, as in being sensible that the part of a lover was not the best suited to him ; and would have been much in the right to have put as speedy an end to it as possible,

had

had he found any other means than that still more improper one of converting the lover into the husband. He pressed for a speedy marriage, and my parents were not desirous to delay it; therefore an early day was fixed for the ceremony.

All I could urge against this determination was of no effect. My tears and my intreaties excited only anger in those whose compassion I attempted to raise. I suffered all, that hatred for the man I was going to marry, and love for him from whom I was to be thus cruelly torn, could inflict; and my expressions were adequate to my distress, but they were all unavailing. I confessed my love for Captain Turnham, and his for me, hoping that might plead for me; but, on the contrary, it convinced them the more of the necessity of marrying me, to prevent me from becoming the wife of one as poor as myself. It had likewise another disagreeable consequence; it made them
watch

watch me so narrowly, that I could not get one moment's interview with Captain Turnham; if he came to the house, I was locked up in my chamber till his departure. I got the means of writing him word of my situation, intreating him, if he loved me, to deliver me from it; offering to fly with him, where-ever he pleased: But I had no opportunity of knowing whether he was too wise to accept my proposal, which I am apt to believe was the case; for all possibility of further intercourse was stopped between us; so very circumspect were my parents; and the day of my marriage found me still exposed and defenceless, to be the victim of their prudence.

I was led, much more dead than alive, up to the altar, where my tottering knees could not support me; but my mother on one side, and my eldest sister on the other, did that office: But before the end of the ceremony, even their assistance was not sufficient; for

I fainted away, which only delayed it; and as soon as I appeared come to myself, it was concluded; tho' I was no more capable of joining in it, either by thought or speech, than when I was in that state of temporary death.

An unprejudiced spectator would have drawn melancholy prognostics for Mr. Merton's future happiness from my conduct; but he seemed unalarmed, appeared all joy, without one sigh of pity either for me or himself; admired my virgin modesty; wished to dissipate my diffidence; but did not once suspect that aversion alone produced all the effects which he attributed to such various causes.

After staying a few days at my father's, Mr. Merton carried me to his country seat, where all was magnificent, and indeed beautiful; but *he* was there; and that was sufficient to change the nature of every thing about me. While he was present, nothing could please.

please. The house was elegant, but *he* inhabited it: The park was fine, but *he* always accompanied me there: The prospect would have been charming, if *he* had not made part of it: But while *he* was always at my elbow, my situation appeared to me no better than a gaudy prison.

Mr. Merton had expected to see me delighted with all the magnificence around me; my insensibility therefore could not fail of being very disagreeable to him. I took no pains to conceal it: My romantic imagination found a melancholy pleasure in shewing my discontent. I formed my conduct on some of the romances I had read; and fancied I acted a noble part, while I was indulging a passion now become criminal, and endeavouring to render a situation, which must be allowed an unhappy one, still more wretched than was necessary. Like most lovers, while their passion remains unabated, I valued *constancy* highly; and therefore placed much merit in sacrificing all the little

satisfaction I might have enjoyed, to what I called the delicacy of my affection for Captain Turnham. The Princess of Cleves was so much my favourite heroine, that had Mr. Merton treated my melancholy with indulgence and good-nature, I have no doubt but I should have made him the confidante of my passion; but as my ill-judged conduct rendered him morose, I thought her highness's example therein, not quite expedient.

All the people of fashion in the neighbourhood came to visit us, as soon as they thought it proper to intrude on the leisure of a new-married couple. The reluctance with which I had accepted this splendid slavery was by some means known in the country; and my appearance shewed how little I was reconciled to it. An old man, who marries a girl whose youth and person prejudice beholders in her favour, has but little chance of being treated with much candour. The
cause

cause of pity on one side is obvious; on the other, indeed, it is very probable: But then so it might have been to the husband himself, before he became such; and if he shut his eyes on the danger into which he was running, while it was not too late to avoid it, people do not very readily give him leave to open them afterwards.

A young woman, who marries an old man, brings her virtue into some danger, and her reputation into more. Young men look upon the wife of an old one as part of their property: They may be disappointed of their conquest, but they generally make the trial. This exposes a woman to frequent temptation. Age is seldom unaccompanied with peevishness; and the retrospection of a man's own folly, which every contrariety in taste or temper represents in glaring colours to him, is not likely to let it lie dormant. Thus he, who can have no merit to a young girl but indulgence, becomes

harsh and ill-tempered; while every younger man is polite, attentive, assiduous, and tender. The contrast is dangerous; but virtue founded on religion (for no other foundation is firm enough to bear so strong a virtue as that must be which has every passion to conquer) may lead a woman thro' this ordeal unhurt; yet even that cannot always secure her character: Probability, built on human frailty, is against her; as in most cases there is an apparent want of principle in a woman's promising love to a man to whom she knows she cannot give it, and entering into a state, whose bonds should be mutual affection, with one who has nothing to render him agreeable to her but money: Every opinion is prejudiced against her, and people are apt to imagine, that she who violates truth, for the indulgence of vanity or avarice, may break the most solemn vows for the gratification of another passion. And thus mankind will always think, because it flatters their hopes; tho' experience

perience continually shews them how very far the argument is from being conclusive, by the very good behaviour of many women, who have reduced themselves into this situation, and who suffer with virtue, tho' with sorrow, during the most valuable part of their lives, for this fatal vanity.

Another circumstance which is apt to hurt a woman's reputation in this situation, is the desire most people have, that the folly of an old man in this respect should not be unpunished; and because they wish it, they are sure to believe it on the smallest evidence.

Pity was visible in every eye that beheld me; which convinced me the more of my own misery. How great must it be, if those who knew only half my sufferings, and who were void of all regard for me, could yet not see me without compassion! Thus I argued, and thus endeavoured to increase my discontent.

One of our visitors told us she was going to Tunbridge: upon which Mr. Merton, to my great surprize, informed her, that we should meet her there. He had never hinted this intention to me; I suppose, because he imagined it might give me pleasure: Nor did I much blame him, as it could not do so but for reasons very far from flattering to him; and my behaviour did not give me a title to expect a very disinterested regard for my satisfaction, as his vanity, together with ignorance of some of my sentiments, must prevent his knowing that I deserved his pity, at least as much as his anger.

Tunbridge had no charms for me, but the chance it seemed to offer me of having less of Mr. Merton's company, and much fewer *tête à tête's*, which were very dreadful, his fondness or his anger being equally odious; and of a reasonable medium between them I saw no hope. Instead of looking on Tunbridge as a place of gaiety
and

and diversion, I proposed no satisfaction from it, but more frequent opportunities of indulging my melancholy, and retiring from every eye.



C H A P. X.

And doubts and fears to jealousies will turn ;
The hottest hell in which a heart can burn.

CONG.

BEFORE the second month of my wedlock was quite expired, we went to Tunbridge ; a place where Mr. Merton resorted yearly, to patch up his tattered constitution. The season was then very full ; but as I had few acquaintance, and wanted spirits to make new ones, it appeared very dull to me ; yet it answered my hopes ; for Mr. Merton was always engaged abroad ; and at first I enjoyed a retirement which the country did not afford me. But the lady I mentioned, by whose means I first learnt Mr. Merton's intention of going thither, was inclined, by the sociableness of her own nature, both to pity the solitude I lived in,

in, and to end the misfortune, by making me come abroad. She would call upon me both morning and evening, and not depart till she prevailed on me to accompany her. I was as void of spirits to resist her importunities, as to enjoy the diversions into which she carried me.

As Mr. Merton had ornamented his victim with many family jewels and fine cloaths, (an expence he had taken on himself) I made too resplendent a figure to pass unnoticed. I soon found I had no occasion to put myself to any trouble for acquaintance; it would have been a greater labour to avoid them. The old ladies were moved by my youth and melancholy to pity me, which gave a pleasing softness to their civility: The young ones forgave me my superior finery, and any advantages of person, when they looked on the doleful consequences of the latter; and when they placed all that vanity could render desirable in me in one account,

and the mighty sum of all Mr. Merton's disagreeableness in the other, they could not suppose the balance of happiness was sufficient to excite one grain of envy.

Thus I became a favourite with my own sex; and I have already given reasons why the other was not likely to be less disposed in my favour. I soon became the determined idol of the men: Some perhaps addressed me from real liking; others, from the hopes my situation inspired; and still more, for the pleasure of making an old man jealous, or to obtain the honour of being thought to have sown dissension between a new-married couple.

I was so indifferent to the opinion of all the people in the place, that I do not believe I should soon have found out this general admiration of the men, if Mr. Merton had not opened my eyes. As soon as they began to shew the least attention to me, he grew jealous;

lous ; and as he was a plain speaker, I was not long ignorant of it. I wondered at his whim ; and set it down to his account as another of his faults : It made no great addition to the number ; for I had collected a large catalogue in my mind, and could make none to my dislike, for it was past increase.

I did not consider how natural jealousy is to a man who knows he is not beloved. My countenance and air sufficiently shewed me capable of love ; and he was sure not to be the object. In such a situation, jealousy was pardonable ; but I was too young to reason deeply ; and had no prepossession in his favour to help me to excuse him. Because I was intirely indifferent to all the men in the place, I thought he injured me grievously ; and resented it accordingly. If I let the men talk to me, it was because I was too indolent to go from them ; and was so absorbed in my own thoughts,

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that

that I scarcely heard one sentence in ten of all they addressed to me.

The indifference I shewed to all, gained me much praise from the old ladies; and the young ones complimented my behaviour, and caressed me extremely, in order to get into the circle of the gentlemen who commonly attended me; and to whom they hoped to recommend themselves by that vivacity which I so much wanted; not doubting to get away every admirer from a woman, whose coldness of manner, and languid mind, scarcely afforded them an answer.

The approbation my conduct received from every other person, made me more highly resent Mr. Merton's suspicions; which soon grew as brutal as they were unjust. I saw no means of avoiding them, but by shutting myself up intirely; which was impossible, unless I had told the reason; and I had sense enough to see that I could not
take

take a more imprudent step. Nor do I imagine any care could have quieted a passion grown to such a rage as Mr. Merton's jealousy, and which undoubtedly was without the least colour of reason from any misconduct of mine: But the sequel seemed to justify him; his imagination did but anticipate the cause; and with him suspicion was prophetic.

Tho' the addresses of many lovers, and the extravagant rage of my husband, could not bring me out of my lethargy of grief (for my spirits were so intirely sunk, that it could be called by no other name), yet a circumstance happened which effected it at once.

I went out one evening, more languid than ever, wearied with flattery in the morning while I was abroad, and with abuse at noon, when dinner brought a *tête à tête* between my husband and myself at home. I was scarcely able to sit up; so much did the
extreme

extreme depression of my spirits affect my whole frame; and was more inclined to vent some of my melancholy in tears, than to go into company: But a lady came to see me, who would take no denial; I must either go to the rooms with her as usual; or, if I was not well enough (for that was the turn I had given to my refusal), she would spend the evening with me.

In my state of dejection, nothing was so distressing as to be obliged to support a conversation with so little assistance; therefore, as the less grievous of so disagreeable an alternative, I consented to go to the public room with her. She had a great deal of good-nature, and therefore was sincerely glad she had prevailed; convinced that dissipation would be of service to one, whose disorder she plainly saw was on her spirits: But her satisfaction was soon checked, and turned into a fear of having done me harm; for we had not
got

got above half up the room, when I fainted away.

This accident drew numbers round me; all the smelling bottles in the room were collected about me; when I came to myself, water and drops were presented me, and every thing offered that promised relief. The lady, who brought me out, immediately asked assistance to carry me home again; but I, who came abroad so unwillingly, now insisted on staying where I was.

A change which so much surprized my companion, was occasioned by the sight of Captain Turnham; which affected my depressed spirits to so violent a degree, as occasioned the disorder that had raised so great an alarm. When I came a little to myself, all the volatiles presented me did less towards reviving me than the appearance of Captain Turnham; who in the croud was attending; tho' with a countenance which expressed real concern,
while

while those of others only spoke the language of civility.

The captain was so prudent as to address me only like a common acquaintance, while we had so many spectators. I took the hint, and answered him in the same manner; but endeavoured as soon as possible to dissipate the croud, and could with a good grace assure them I was quite well; for my joy had proved to me such a cordial, that all agreed they had never seen me look so well.

Captain Turnham watched the opportunity, and we got half an hour's uninterrupted conversation; wherein, after lamenting our hard fate, he informed me, that had it not been for his father's sickness, and then his death, of which I had heard, he should have set out for Tunbridge the moment he knew we were gone thither; and that he could not persuade himself to remain in the country an hour

hour after he had performed the most necessary duties. He was in doubt whether it might be proper to come to my house; therefore dressed himself as soon as he arrived, and repaired to the public room, where he hoped to find me; and after having walked round it, and convinced himself that I was not there, he placed himself near the door, that he might not fail of seeing me as I entered.

I thought myself lucky in having that half hour allowed me; and I found I was not to expect its continuance; for I perceived some of my acquaintance coming up to me, at which I could not forbear expressing my vexation. Captain Turnham just hinted the necessity of appearing country acquaintance, which might excuse our intimacy. Accordingly I asked many questions about my family, and my former neighbours, who had indeed borne no share in our conversation till then; and this was repeated in every new set of company.

company, both that evening and the next day.

As Captain Turnham had made some acquaintance with Mr. Merton, when he first came into our neighbourhood, and learnt from me that my relations had been prudent enough to conceal the share my love had in my reluctance to the marriage, he went up to the card table where he was playing, carried him the compliments of my family, and of his friend, and of many others who had never sent them; for he had not declared his intention of going to Tunbridge.

Tho' Mr. Merton was not then mightily delighted with the consequences of his visit in that county, yet, as he had received great civilities there, he enquired after them with pleasure, and gave the captain a general invitation to his house, and a particular one for the next day, which was sure to be accepted.

An

An intimacy between me and one with whom I was supposed to have been acquainted from my childhood, appeared so natural, that people were not quick at taking offence at it; and Mr. Merton, who boiled over with rage if I did but speak to, or look at, any other man, appeared free from all suspicion of Captain Turnham; tho' the change in me was so very apparent, as might have been observable to one less jealous. My eyes became animated; my complexion glowed; I spoke with ease; and my whole air was changed: But this was all attributed to the waters, which I drank from the time I first came there; and I was quoted as the greatest cure they had performed that season, by all but Mr. Merton, who imagined the alteration proceeded only from the pleasure I took in being admired; and if I looked particularly blooming, or more animated than common, it would throw him into such outrageous passions.

sions, that Captain Turnham's presence could not restrain, who thereby often became the witness of his brutality; which gave me less uneasiness, when I knew I was tenderly pitied by the object of all my affections: Nor indeed could I well have been angry; for tho' Mr. Merton had nothing particular to lay to my charge, but only supposed, that as I did not love him, I must like some of those whose assiduities he observed, tho' my behaviour gave not the least reason for his suspicion, yet I was conscious that he had in reality sufficient cause, though he knew it not.

Captain Turnham was extremely cautious in his conduct to me; and by that means taught me a care, which, infatuated as I was, I should probably not otherwise have taken: But as this laid him under a great restraint, he thought he deserved to be rewarded by some private interviews, wherein he

he might have liberty to speak his passion, without being obliged to guard every look, to prevent spectators from knowing the subject of our conversation.

To this my fears of a discovery made some objection; nor was I without apprehensions from the imprudence of his passion, which I feared my own was too violent to be able to repress. I saw that a lover, who knew he was too much beloved to give any real offence, must be a very dangerous person. Tho' Mr. Merton had no share of my affections, I was determined to keep what I called my conjugal fidelity. "*He comes too near, who comes to be denied*", has been truly said. My behaviour gave Captain Turnham sufficient encouragement to be very importunate in his solicitations for a private meeting, and the weakness he presumed upon was his friend; for at last he prevailed;
and



CHAP. XI.

Anger, in hasty words and blows,
 Itself discharges on its foes :
 Our sorrow too finds some relief,
 In tears, that wait upon our grief.
 Thus every passion, but fond love,
 Unto its own redress does move :
 But that alone the wretch inclines
 To what prevents her own designs ;
 To acts that render her despis'd,
 Where she endeavours to be priz'd.

WALLER,

A Woman seldom stops at the first
 imprudence. I had been with
 difficulty prevailed upon to consent to
 the first private interview with Captain
 Turnham ; but after that was once
 granted, I made no scruple of another
 meeting ; and then of another still ;
 and so on, till they came almost daily.
 The respect with which he at first be-
 haved,

haved, encouraged me to trust him again. The danger vanished from my thoughts; and I did not see why I should deny myself and my lover so great a pleasure as we received from the liberty of professing our mutual love, and lamenting the cruelty of fortune and parents, which had divided us, when this indulgence might be granted without an infringement of virtue; for I did not perceive that my husband had a right to require me to be prudent as well as to be chaste; and that encouraging the passion of another man, or indulging my own for him, was an offence against virtue, within whatever bounds I restrained my actions.

A woman who hopes to preserve her virtue after she has laid aside decorum, is as foolish as a man would be, who should expect to defend a town, whose fortifications and outworks are destroyed, against a powerful enemy; especially if there is treachery within, which

which I am afraid is the case when a woman's affections are strongly engaged.

I could not so easily deceive Captain Turnham as I did myself: He knew the consequence of all my actions, and how long respect was necessary to deprive me of all fear; the only enemy he had: And virtue followed my prudence, as is generally the case with her who parts with the latter.

These private meetings enabled us the better to constrain ourselves in public; and we had the satisfaction of continuing our course unsuspected, till one night that my housekeeper passed by just as I came out of Captain Turnham's lodging with him, and visibly observed me. I that instant anticipated the punishment of my crime; the immediate consequence occurring at once to me. My fright was excessive; I could not support myself; and was forced to return with the Captain

into his lodging, till I was enough recovered to walk.

This housekeeper was one, who, as I learned from the lady I have mentioned as my neighbour, had, during the continuance of her youth, lived with Mr. Merton in another capacity; nor had her office quite ceased till he married me: But as her bloom was past, corpulency had impaired her beauty, and possession had long rendered Mr. Merton tired of her. He informed her, that she could no longer serve him in the same character; but, as a reward, he constituted her housekeeper.

As this woman looked on me as the cause of her being degraded into a servant, and an interloper on her rights, it is no wonder she hated me; and she soon made me sensible of it by her insolence; which was so great, that I had several times expressed to Mr. Merton my inclination to part with

with her; thinking it a necessary piece of complaisance to him, as she had been his servant before she was mine.

At first, he mildly desired me to try her longer; telling me, good servants would take upon them: But I could not perceive her such; for I saw she was extravagant, wasteful, and idle; and at each fresh instance of her insolence, urged her other faults, as reasons why I should not be exposed to her insults: But as Mr. Merton's temper grew worse, he began to receive such complaints with much ill humour, and to tell me plainly, that she should not be turned away; that the house-keeper was as much his servant as mine; and he would not lose a good one by my perverseness.

As this woman knew by whose interest she kept her place, and saw therein a sufficient proof of the little power I had, she lost all respect, and behaved to me with continual insolence,

lence, and scarcely suffered any other servant in the house to obey me. This would have been a very mortifying circumstance to one, whose thoughts had not been to entirely engrossed by other vexations, as to receive little additional uneasiness from lesser griefs. It had indeed increased my contempt for, and aversion to, Mr. Merton; but it never appeared to me in the light of an affliction till now, that I saw, all possible use would be made by such a woman of the discovery she had in her power; and if any addition or exaggeration was necessary I did not doubt but she would supply the defect.

In this situation I knew not how to return home; nor could the Captain offer me any consolation; for he was almost as wretched as myself. The only expedient he could offer to save me from the brutal rage of my husband, was, that I should fly with him: But I could not resolve to give up my character,

Mr

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character, fortune and friends, and live the object of contempt and scorn. I had but little reason to expect any favour from a man whom I had so cruelly injured, when I had experienced the greatest brutality imaginable from him without the least cause. But I thought it scarcely possible for him to treat me worse than he already had done, without my giving any occasion for it. He had not proof sufficient for a divorce; therefore I hoped to avoid public shame: For had it been told that I was seen coming out of the Captain's lodging, my reputation was on so good a footing, that it would only have been treated as an ambiguous circumstance.

With these considerations I encouraged myself as much as possible. I had gone into the public room as soon as I left the Captain, and could not prevail on myself to go home till most of the company was departed. At my return to my lodging, I soon found

Mr. Merton had been long enough at home, and the time had been made so good use of by the housekeeper, that he was acquainted with the place where she had seen me; for I was received with such an air of rage and fury, that I was really afraid for my life.

I had not been able to invent a very good excuse for my being in those lodgings; and what I had framed, might with some examination perhaps have been proved to be false; as I designed to pretend that I had made visits to ladies, who possibly were in the public room: But some such thing was necessary to account for my time, and for my passing by the Captain's. As I was so poorly provided with an apology, it was no part of my misfortune that Mr. Merton would not give me an opportunity to defend myself.

His abuse descended to every infamous appellative; and I was forbid to appear in his presence, put into the custody

custody of my accuser, and ordered to be locked up in a garret,

This command was punctually obeyed, and I was rudely dragged to the dirtiest garret in the house, which stunk with filth and damp. In that consisted my sole consolation; for my jailor did not chuse to stay in so noisome a place; therefore I was delivered from her insults: But she was resolved I should receive as little relief as possible from her absence; for she took the candle with her, leaving me in the midst of all this dirt without light to enable me to avoid it.

I had not strength to go feeling about for a seat, but sunk upon the ground; and there I remained, a prey to despair, remorse, and resentment, till the morning's dawn tempted me to rise from the filth with which I was encompassed, and turned some of my thoughts to the loathsomeness of the place where I was confined. I soon

perceived it must have been long uninhabited, and intirely converted into a lumber-room, which no living creature occupied, but spiders, beetles, and much other and more offensive vermin: As there was neither chair nor bed in it, I could hope for no rest, but on scraps of old boxes and such lumber.

The day made no other alteration in my sufferings, than in subjecting me to the cruellest insults from the infamous wretch by whose brutality I was committed. I begged earnestly to see Mr. Merton, and to have leave to defend myself. I asserted, that tho' the circumstances against me gave room for suspicion, yet they were not sufficient cause for such treatment. But all I could urge was in vain: I addressed unwilling ears; and on such there is little chance to make much impression.

Grief

Grief and watching rendered me extremely dry; but it was with difficulty I obtained a little tea: For the cruel wretch, from whom I asked it, said, she did not know whether she should not be false to her trust if she gave me any, being only ordered to provide me with necessary sustenance; but she thought tea was an indulgence, and therefore out of her instructions: However, finding I could eat nothing, she let me have some twice in the day, provided I would eat some bread with it; for she thought it too easy to be starved, even by a short abstinence, that I believe she was afraid of losing a power wherein she took so much satisfaction, and that death should rob her of her victim.

I asked, if I was never to go to bed, any more, since no such piece of furniture seemed to be thought necessary. She told me, I might do very well without for some time longer: Some mortification was proper after too much in-

indulgence. I then begged for a chair,
 and that one of the servants might be
 suffered to sweep and dust the room.
 She answered, " that if I had been as
 " nice in my behaviour as about my
 " habitation, I should never have been
 " there." Tho' the reproach was in-
 solent from her, yet it was just; my
 conscience assented, and I was silent.

In this way the day passed; and it
 is scarcely possible to imagine a greater
 agony of despair than I was in. To-
 wards the evening I heard a footstep
 at my door, and a rustling: The odd-
 ness of the noise made me look round,
 and I saw a paper was pushed under
 the door. I made all the haste to
 snatch it that I was able; and as soon
 as opened, I perceived it was Captain
 Turnham's hand. Joy would hardly
 suffer me to read it directly; and when
 I began, the fear of being caught in
 the perusal, and that my confusion in
 hiding it should cause suspicion, and
 occasion a second search (for my
 pockets

pockets had undergone one before, less to the satisfaction of my persecutor than to my own), agitated me so much, that I was with difficulty able to go thro' it, especially as it was pretty long.

Captain Turnham told me in it, that he had not been able to rest all the past night, from his apprehensions for me; which were greatly increased, by neither Mr. Merton nor myself having made our appearance in the morning. He was afraid of coming to our lodging to make any inquiry; and could not bear to return to his own, as he had there little chance of getting any information. About noon a rumour began to be spread, that Mr. Merton had discovered a criminal correspondence between him and me, and had confined me to my room, till he determined what further was to be done. He had observed a whisper run round the room, and every eye turned towards him;

and a friend gave him that account of the occasion of it. This, he continued, increased his apprehensions. He understood by this that the housekeeper had not been silent, and feared the first effects of Mr. Merton's rage; but the circumstance was so short of proof of any thing criminal, that he did not imagine it possible for him to be guilty of any lasting outrage in consequence of it, but, to be the better assured of all particulars, he went home, and sent his footman to our lodgings to inquire of our servants the occasion of some strange reports which were spread about me. He waited in his apartment for his man's return, who brought him a full detail of all that had passed; which by no means lost in the repetition, the servants being disposed in my favour, having always found me better tempered than their master or his housekeeper. The captain added, that the account of the brutality with which I had been

been treated; almost distracted him, and in the most tender and importunate manner beseeched me to suffer him to deliver me from this horrid tyranny; which he proposed to do, by fixing a high ladder to my window, the night but one after I received this letter. He said he had viewed it, and found it practicable; that he would come up it, and guide my trembling steps, and have a post-chaise ready to carry us directly to London. He proposed delaying it till the time mentioned, that he might get a chaise from thence, to prevent our being discovered immediately; for if we hired one at Tunbridge, we should be too easily traced.

That most eloquent metal gold had prevailed on one of Mr. Merton's servants to deliver this letter; but as there was no means of answering it, he informed me he should proceed in the plan he had mentioned to me without delay; and trusted, that if I had any
 value

value for my life or his, I should not be backward in complying with his proposal; for my reputation was as much lost as if I had taken the most public steps to destroy it. Every tender sentiment, which he thought could afford me the least consolation, was added to the letter; and I confess it proved a great cordial to me.

The assurances of his love, the hopes of a deliverance from what I suffered, and the strength of my own passion, left me no scruples about complying with his proposal: And tho' the time appeared too distant, yet expectation gave me such a recruit of spirits, as enabled me to bear it.



C H A P. XII.

There is a lust in man, no charm can tame,
 Of loudly publishing his neighbour's shame:
 On eagles wings immortal scandals fly,
 While virtuous actions are but born to die.

Harv. Juv.

MY greatest fear now was, that my jailor should relent, and place me in a more comfortable room; as it seemed scarcely possible that she should leave me three nights without the power of going to bed, or even of putting myself into an easy posture: But my apprehensions were vain; her malice preserved its full force, and her insults continued: Nor did I then endeavour to pacify her; but received her, when she entered, either with fullness or resentment, lest her anger should flag.

I could

I could indeed have wished she would have granted me a candle, that I might enliven the tedious length of the night with the perusal of Captain Turnham's letter; as I should then have enjoyed it with more liberty, freed from the apprehensions of her coming into the room: But herein I could not prevail; so had nothing but my imagination and expectation to console me.

This enabled me to support life till the appointed night came. I longed to shed poppies over all the family, to send them early to their rest; and was impatient at their sitting up so long. But when I had my wish, and the house seemed as quiet as the grave, instead of the joy I expected to feel on the occasion, I was full of tremors: I trembled if my own gown rustled; the striking of a clock alarmed me; and if a dog barked, I fell into agonies.

My

My imagination suggested a thousand noises, and every one was more dreadful to me than the execution bell of a poor criminal. When it grew dark, I had placed myself just by the window: I now opened and shut it continually, not knowing well why I did either; but after two hours expectation, which in the anxious agitation of my mind appeared an age, in one of the periods that the window remained open, I heard a little noise, and immediately the voice of my love whispered my name.

The beating of my heart rendered me almost unable to answer him; but if I had been more loquacious, he would not have waited for my indulging it. He was so impatient to get me out of my prison, that he intreated me to make no delay; telling me at the same time, that the highest ladder he could get was not quite long enough; but he had found some broken places in the wall, which giving a
rest

rest to his feet, had supplied that deficiency, and he hoped he should convey me down as successfully as he had mounted.

This particular was very dreadful to me, who had looked with horror on the great height I had to descend, from the time I first received Captain Turnham's letter; But he allowed me little time for reflection; catching me up in his arms, and lifting me out of the window, ready to expire with fright. The second step he made, he revived me, by saying, "Now we are safe enough". He had then reached the ladder, which afforded him firmer footing; and it was not long before we were quite down it.

He hurried me to the chaise, while his men carried the ladder away; and I had now recovered the power of speech; and, according to a design I had framed, begged he would let his servant guide me to what place he thought

thought proper, and that he would remain at Tunbridge a few days longer, to remove in some degree the suspicion from himself; and to contrive to have it given out, that I had made my escape in the night, only in order to fly from the brutal usage I had received, and without any male companion in my flight.

Captain Turnham was not well inclined to comply with my request; but as it was much the most prudent proceeding, I prevailed upon him to grant it, and was put under the care of his servant.

We travelled with great expedition; and, tho' the night was extremely dark, arrived in London soon after break of day. According to the Captain's direction, I was placed in a convenient lodging in the city; the busiest place being judged the fittest for concealment. Idleness renders people curious: Those who have little business

finers themselves employ their time in observing others; and a vacant mind, empty of ideas, is always searching abroad for things foreign to itself, to fill the void; while the sons of care and industry, and votaries of riches, are too good economists, even of their thoughts, to throw them away where they can hope for no return of profit. They are so used to traffic, that they look on their attention as one of their commodities, which should not be expended without considerable advantage.

I had reason to think the choice of my situation was well made. The people, with whom I lodged, beheld me in no other light, than as one who was to pay them a stipulated sum weekly; and if they saw no reason to doubt my payment, nothing else in me could merit their attention. I came indeed at an unusual hour; was very fine, and very dirty; having passed three days and nights in the same dress:

dress: But this was my business and not theirs; so they paid no regard to it.

I was void of all necessaries, and longed for the refreshment of clean linen; and fortunately had sufficient in my pocket to purchase it. For this I was obliged to a piece of carelessness, for which I must have been angry with myself, if the consequences had not excused it. I had given my maid a bank bill for thirty pounds, to get converted into cash; wherein not having succeeded, she gave it me just as I stepped out of the door. I was then going to Captain Turnham's lodgings; a proceeding which I was sensible was so wrong, that I could never do it without great flutter of spirits. In this hurry, I put it loose into my pocket; having only just precaution enough to stuff it into my little pocket within my large one, made originally for my snuff-box. When the housekeeper searched me, she took my pocket-book
and

and purse, and whatever else she liked, esteeming it a lawful capture; but happily this little scrap of paper remained unfelt, and so became no part of the prize.

This was a great resource to me; for tho' the Captain had ordered his servant to provide me with every thing I wanted, yet it would have been painful to me to have made such immediate use of that liberty, as I knew his circumstances were but narrow.

I purchased change of linen, and a gown less rich and gaudy, ready made; and tho' I still was in a situation which would a week before have appeared dreadful to me; yet, when compared to the misery I had suffered the three preceding days, it seemed tolerable, and I soon became able to take food and rest; for I stood in great want of such refreshment.

The

The next day brought me a letter from Captain Turnham, filled with expressions of his impatience to come to me; but yet he acknowledged my commands were prudent. He informed me, that knowing me in safety, free from my brutal tyrants, gave him spirits enough to be one of the earliest abroad; and, with a composure, and ease of countenance and manner, which assisted the deception we intended, he applied to the servant he had before bribed, to know what passed in Mr. Merton's family; and from him learnt, that my escape was not discovered till near ten o'clock the next morning, the housekeeper not finding leisure to go before into the room.

Upon seeing the window open, and her prisoner missing, she raised a great clamour, which brought up Mr. Merton: Then all the servants were called and examined; but no one being able to give any account of an event they

all rejoiced in, it was immediately determined I was run away with Captain Turnham. This news was soon brought to the walks by a Lady, who had received it from her servant. The fact was denied by the person to whom she related it, and who assured her she had but just left the Captain in the public room.

Upon this, many confused stories were raised; in none of which there was any truth, except that I was gone. Mr. Merton went to the inns, but could not hear of any equipage or horses that had come there or gone from thence that night. He sent to Tunbridge town, with as little success.

Intirely at a loss what to think, he carried proper officers, when the Captain was abroad, and searched his lodgings. After having thus persuaded himself that I could not be gone from that place, he fancied I had got
no

no farther than my legs could carry me, and sent his servants different ways, to search all the roads and fields as far as he thought it possible for me to stray. The servants agreed on an alehouse for their rendezvous, where they ended their perquisition; and were drinking success to my escape, while their master imagined they were assiduously endeavouring to trace it. The housekeeper was the only one who did her office; she had also undertaken the search, and walked more that day than she had done for three years before. Animated by rage, she went on till she was so spent, that she was scarcely able to get home again, and remained very ill with her fatigue.

The reports she gave of her little success, and the unavailing labours of the rest of the servants, which they set forth in strong colours, having had sufficient leisure to settle their several marches, recommended them much

to their master's favour, but gave him little satisfaction. He had no hope left, but that in a few days necessity must bring me out of my concealment.

This search after me was known to the whole place; and curiosity made all the company as eager to learn the event, as the person most concerned. There was not one who did not go to the back part of the house, though the road to it was very rugged, to see the window from whence I had made my escape. Some of them, surprised that Captain Turnham had not had the curiosity to look at it, carried him to see what a dreadful height it was.

No one appeared so anxious as he: "He had the regard," he said, "of an old acquaintance and neighbour for me, and was sincerely interested in my fate; but should be very miserable, if he thought the treatment I had received could bear any reference
"ence

“ence to him; which he thought impossible, as every one must see there was no air of gallantry between us.” Many agreed with him; others were convinced that jealousy could not be without some cause. Thus the whole place was engaged in disputes, which they were not likely to determine.

Mr. Merton easily conceived the window was too high for me to get out of without a ladder. He therefore went to every place where he supposed any were kept, to inquire if theirs had been used that night; but the Captain had bribed a man to get it out of his neighbour's yard; and lest he should have an opportunity of telling, bought his absence from the place for a fortnight.

When the Captain heard Mr. Merton had searched his lodging, he thought it not consistent with his character to suffer such an outrage patiently; therefore he went to Mr. Mer-

ton, and inquired what reason he had for such insolence. Mr. Merton was too wise to chuse to venture his life, for which he had no small regard, because he had lost a wife he did not love; and, with due meekness and civility, begged his pardon, if he had done what was not proper: But desired him to consider his case deserved some allowance; for few men could bear to have a wife run away, without being turned a little beyond the bounds of reason and good manners.

“Very likely,” replied the Captain; “but why was I to be the person on whom this was to fall?” Mr. Merton then told him, that he thought he had just reason to suspect a criminal correspondence between me and him, and mentioned the cause of his suspicion.

The Captain acknowledged the fact, and accounted for it, by “having met me in a visit, from whence he offered

"ferred to wait on me to the public
 "room; but in my way I fell down,
 "and hurt my ankle so much, that
 "I could not immediately walk; and
 "being near his lodgings, he helped
 "me in there, and left me to rub it
 "with lavender water, which I had
 "in my pocket, till I was sufficiently
 "relieved to be able to proceed: That
 "he would have sent for a chair for
 "me; but it being only a step to the
 "walks, I chose, with leaning on
 "him, to go there on foot."

Mr. Merton did not think the Cap-
 tain's word a sufficient confutation of
 his suspicions; but judged it more
 proper to appear satisfied, than to re-
 sent: The extreme bustle that arose
 from this incident had confounded the
 fact; every body supposing the action
 must be very flagrant, which was fol-
 lowed by such consequences. Thus
 the truth was dropped, and the vari-
 ous reports were so contradictory, that
 at last it became doubtful whether

there was any foundation for all that had been done against me. Every man acquitted me in his own opinion; for each knowing me to have been reserved to *him*, thought it impossible I should not be so to all; for whose charms could be superior?



C H A P. XIII.

While our former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of power to sin.

DRYDEN.

THO' I could no longer pretend to
virtue, I was not so lost to shame,
but that I wished to preserve what re-
putation I had remaining: It could
be but little; for every spot on a wo-
man's fame is indelible. But there is
a great difference in the situation of
one whose character is ambiguous, and
of her who has put it beyond all
doubt.

I flattered myself, that if my parents
would espouse my cause, I might still
be preserved from infamy, and obtain
a separate maintenance: Which, how-
ever small, would have contented me.

As soon, therefore, as rest had sufficiently refreshed me, I wrote my father an account of the whole of Mr. Merton's treatment of me, and of his outrageous jealousy of Captain Turnham, so highly and so suddenly conceived; omitting no circumstance which I hoped might plead in my favour; intreating his countenance and intercession towards procuring a separation, which would not brand me with infamy, and bring shame on my family, as well as ruin on myself. I desired him to direct his letter to one who was a friend of Captain Turnham's servant, from whence he could fetch it; for I was not sure enough of success, to trust my father with the knowledge of my abode.

Captain Turnham remained above a week at Tunbridge; from whence I heard from him regularly; and found, that as every day rendered the contradictions and absurdities in the stories relating to me more palpable,
it

it was still possible that I might be acquitted by the generality of the world. This made me very impatient for my father's answer, on which it intirely depended; for without Mr. Merton could be brought to consent to a separation, and some allowance, I could not venture to shew myself to any one; but must skulk in corners like a criminal, for fear of falling again into the cruel hands from which I had escaped.

I had strongly represented to my father the dreadful consequences of his refusal; and hoped the honour of his family, if no other consideration availed, would obtain his concurrence: But when his answer came, I found I was mistaken. He wrote me word, that " had Mr. Merton been jealous
 " of any other man than Captain
 " Turnham, he would not have de-
 " termined against me without ex-
 " amining the case; but the know-
 " lege he had of my violent passion
 I s " for

“ for him, and his having followed
 “ me to Tunbridge, together with my
 “ aversion to my husband, convinced
 “ him so fully of my guilt, that no
 “ other proof was wanting: That
 “ the honour of the family, for which
 “ I pleaded, forbad his shewing any
 “ countenance to her who would dis-
 “ grace it; and that on that account,
 “ as well as for a necessary example
 “ to the rest of his children, he dis-
 “ claimed me for ever.”

This letter shocked me beyond de-
 scription. I valued my reputation high-
 ly, and now saw it lost for ever. I
 was become the outcast of the world;
 Captain Turnham alone was willing
 to receive me; but I dreaded a depen-
 dence on a man whose esteem could
 not equal his love; and how soon
 might general contempt extinguish his
 passion! All this I saw when it was
 too late,

In

In the bitterness of my soul I answered my father's letter; and represented to him, with all the anguish that I felt it, how he had totally effected my ruin, first by sacrificing me forcibly to a wretch I hated, and must despise; and then by refusing me a protection, which might have made me some recompence for his past cruelty. I then represented the inevitable infamy to which he consigned me; I laid my vice and shame to his charge, and pressed it home upon his conscience.

I had just disburthened my heart of some of its anguish, when Captain Turnham arrived, and revived me so much by his presence, that I almost forgot my sorrows. I had now given up all hopes of assistance from my family, and consequently of preserving my reputation; therefore endeavoured, as far as I was able, to banish all thoughts of it; and my lover, in order to contribute to my ease of mind,

assisted me in this attempt; whereby all the principle I had left was totally overthrown. While we keep a regard for the opinion of others, we have some remains of virtue; but she who consigns herself over not only to vice, but to shame, never fails of becoming abandoned: She is reduced to it in her own defence; for by no other means can she obtain a moment's ease of mind, if that indolence of temper, which is the best state such an one can arrive at, can be called by the name of ease. When every virtuous principle we have reproaches us, we are apt to employ all endeavours to extirpate them; and to deliver ourselves from the pain our guilt inflicts, by becoming more guilty. We fancy it will be a less labour to lose the sense of virtue, than to learn the practice of it: A great and fatal error! For we can never intirely fear our consciences; and there are times when the most hardened severely suffer for all

all the pleasures their crimes have yielded them.

I experienced this truth in its full force. Tho' Captain Turnham's passion for me was unabated, and I loved him to distraction, yet I was not happy. But as few people can bear the melancholy of others, I concealed it as much as possible from him; and endeavoured to please him, by a cheerfulness which was often a stranger to my heart. As his income was small, I knew I must be a heavy burden on his purse; and found I was likely to become still more so. I therefore applied myself as much as possible to œconomy, as some relief to my pride, which suffered at the thought of being maintained at his expence.

We had lived together above half a year, without Mr. Merton's having been able to find out where we were, when Captain Turnham was ordered to quarters at Reading. This was a

melancholy circumstance to us, tho' no more than we had reason to expect sooner. It affected us doubly: The expence of living separate was more than could easily be afforded by the Captain's income; and we still loved too well to bear to be asunder, especially when my situation rendered it more grievous, being then big with child; but it was too dangerous for me to venture to his quarters, as I might there be so easily found out.

We were obliged then to part, tho' with the utmost regret; and as he was not able to get leave of absence for more than a day at a time, while I could travel, we used to meet half-way; and, after the consolation of a few hours of each other's company, returned to our respective homes. This was an expensive indulgence; but when seeing each other was in question, all oeconomy was forgot.

When

When I lay-in, Captain Turnham pressed for leave of absence with such importunity, that he obtained permission for a whole week; during which his company enabled me to bear my sickness with more content than health could give me in his absence. He made me another visit before my confinement was over; which, tho' but for a day, was a great cordial to my spirits.

The child I brought into the world was a boy, and my only pleasure in his father's absence, who seemed to look on him as an additional tie of affection to me. But he promised me much care and anxiety, being a weakly child.

When I had intirely recovered my lying-in, the Captain being taken ill, tho' of but a slight fever, intimated a great desire to see me; upon which I went to Reading directly, and after staying a week there, left him quite well;

well; and we engaged to continue the practice of meeting half-way: In which short journeys I flattered myself our little boy might safely accompany me, as the sight of him would be an additional pleasure to his father.

I returned in the stage-coach; wherein all my fellow travellers were women. My heart had been heavy at parting with Captain Turnham; but as I drew nearer London, the expectation of seeing my little boy afforded me consolation, tho' the thought of his sickly frame mixed a little anxiety with it, not being free from fears that I might find him still worse than when I had last heard of him.

When we were within two miles of London, the coach was stopped by some men, who rode up to us. We prepared for being robbed; and part of the company was excessively frightened: My purse was near empty; and my apprehensions were small, till I perceived,

ceived, amongst those I took for highwaymen, a servant of Mr. Merton's. This sight threw me into the utmost terror; and it was immediately completed by the approach of his coach, wherein I saw my husband, and my bitter enemy his housekeeper.

The coach-door was opened; and the servants, whose countenances expressed more compassion than suited their office, took hold of me to lift me out of the stage into Mr. Merton's. I gave a loud scream, and immediately fell into fits. My companions, terrified with such a scene, screamed too, with such unwearied cries, that they were not over when I came to myself.

The servants, alarmed at the effect their attempt had on me, desisted; but as I recovered, I heard Mr. Merton cursing them for minding a woman's fits, and ordering them to take me as I was. They obeyed, and put me

me into the coach to him: On which my fits returned, and I was not sensible for many minutes at a time that day; which was therefore happier than many that succeeded it.

At night we arrived at an inn, where I was put to bed directly. I found the housekeeper was to lie in the room; but for the present she was content with locking me in, and went downstairs, not chusing so irksome an employment as attending me in my fits, nor concerning herself what became of me in them.

I was sensible of one more attack; but am inclined to think that was all; for I burst into a violent flood of tears, which relieved me; and my terrors were a little abated by finding myself alone.

Excessive terror, like excessive pain, brings itself some relief, by depriving us for a time of sense. Tho' my fear
was

was not so extreme, my misery was now greater; since I had acquired the power of feeling it, by the recovery of my senses. I had every thing to dread for myself from the hands into which I was fallen. When I considered the cruelty wherewith I had been treated on a bare suspicion, what might I not expect when my offence was great and palpable! But this was not my only affliction; I was torn from the man I loved, Heaven knows! much better than myself: He would remain ignorant of what was become of me; perhaps think that the woman who had broke sacred vows for him, had now violated those solemn vows she had so often made to him, and left him for some new lover: Or, if his heart still did me justice, he would not be able to deliver me from this new slavery; for I could not doubt but entire care would be taken for the future to prevent a possibility of escape.

My

My child was another addition to my misfortunes : He wanted the tender care of a mother, to watch his infant weakness. I feared no one would well supply this place, now I was torn from him ; nor knew I how to support life in an entire ignorance of his existence, which hung by so weak a thread.

How miserable is that wretch, who in her misfortunes cannot pray to the only Being who has power to alleviate her distress ! who, when the world appears armed against her, cannot have the consolation of thinking she has a friend in superior mansions ! and need not fear man, who can only kill her body, when she knows there is One who will preserve her soul ; and if she is thrust with violence from this land of wretchedness, will receive her into everlasting habitations, where the wicked cease to trouble, and all tears are wiped from the eyes !

How

How far was I from this situation! I had offended as grievously against the laws of God, as against human institutions; and if I considered him as a Being who beholds the works of the children of men, I must see myself the object of his wrath. I had therefore learned to think He regarded us but little; which had lessened my terrors, but deprived me of all hope of relief from Him. And what could I expect from a sorrow, which would not have been for my sins, but for their consequences: I could not give up the object of my affections; greater faith, and much divine grace, were requisite to enable me to make such a sacrifice; therefore my thoughts durst not wander beyond this world, where my prospect was most wretched, without a glimmering of hope to cheer me in the dreary road of affliction that lay open before me; and which I was conscious I deserved from the person who inflicted it.



C H A P. XIV.

I have been in such a dismal place,
Where joy ne'er enters, which the sun ne'er
cheers;

Bound in with darkness, overspread with damps!

DRYDEN.

MY gaoler required a great deal of refreshment after the wearisome day she had past; which prevented her coming to bed very early, and gave me leisure to weep myself almost into a state of stupefaction. This was the most desirable condition I could be in. My persecutor looked into my close-drawn bed-curtains, and vented some reproaches; but seeing me scarcely sensible, she would not throw away such precious words, and went to her rest.

As day began to break, I fell into more lively terrors, fearing I should
again

again be exposed to see, and be seen by, Mr. Merton; which was the most dreadful circumstance imaginable to me, as it occasioned both the greatest apprehensions and self-reproaches.

When my gaoler awaked, she called to me to rise. I was hardly able to obey her; so much was I spent with the violence of my fits the day before: But she quickened my feeble motions with the harshest expressions; and fear restored part of the strength of which it had deprived me. After frequent efforts, she found it was impossible for me to get down-stairs without help; but not condescending to assist me, she called two of the footmen, who supported me to the coach, and lifted me into it; for the fear of seeing Mr. Merton there, as I approached it, deprived me entirely of the little strength I had remaining.

Surely all mental sufferings put together cannot make so great a sum of misery

misery as a mixture of anxiety and fear, such as I at that moment felt. I verily think, if Mr. Merton had then appeared, nature must have been totally overcome with the shock; but the shutting of the door after the housekeeper got into the coach to me, gave me breath. I took it as an indication that we were to perform the rest of our journey without him; but durst not ask if my hopes were well grounded.

Tho' I had been long exposed to shame, yet, in the midst of all my apprehensions, I was not insensible of seeing myself a spectacle to every person in the inn, or belonging to it. They were all standing in the yard to see me, with such faces of eager curiosity, as expressed too little compassion for a wretch, who, however blameable, was now surely a melancholy object.

The

The silence I kept was an example not followed by my fellow-traveller; she soon began to descant on my wickedness, and on my ingratitude to one who had taken me without a farthing, and made me mistress of so many fine things. The charge against me was not put in terms most likely to affect me; but I had sufficient cause for tears, and wept without uttering a syllable the whole day; great part of which she passed in exercising on me her talent of abuse: But sleep was sometimes my friend; for tho' it would not close my eyelids, it did her's, and stopped the almost perpetual motion of her tongue.

I was so ignorant of the roads, that I did not know whether we were travelling that which led to Mr. Merton's seat; but judged, by the distance it was at from London, that if we were bending our course that way, we must arrive there before night: On the contrary, as it grew dusk, we en-

tered into another inn. I began to wonder where they were carrying me: I asked the servant who helped me out of the coach, what town that was? But the answer only served to shew me we were certainly not in the road to the place I most feared.

My gaoler guessed the reason of my question; and thinking I should be more vexed at knowing the truth, than I was by my perplexity, she satisfied my curiosity, as soon as we got into the inn, by telling me, “ we were going
 “ to an old house of Mr. Merton’s;
 “ a proper place to be turned into a
 “ prison for such a creature as I was;
 “ but that indeed she should not stay in
 “ such a doleful hole any longer than
 “ till a proper person was found to
 “ take care and keep me in order, till
 “ law had procured a divorce, and left
 “ me to starve, or to lead such shameful
 “ courses as I had begun.”

The

The only part of this information which was not some relief to my spirits, was the last article. Sunk as I was in the world, I shuddered at the thought of being publicly branded with infamy by the law, and made the subject of all the ribaldry used on such occasions: But this was at some distance; and to learn that I should not be again exposed to the sight of Mr. Merton, nor long be the sport of this woman's cruelty, was a present satisfaction, and enabled me the better to perform the remainder of my journey, which ended the next day.

Before it was dark we descended a very steep hill; at the foot of it stood rather a ruin than a house, to which we drove. "Here," said my gaoler, "you may remain to old age, if the walls do not release you from your captivity by falling down, and knocking your brains out." The alternative did not sound very comfortable; but life appeared at that time of

too little value, for me to view, with any great uneasiness, the tottering building which was become my habitation. In an happier state it would have filled me with horrors; for half of it was already fallen, and much of the rest supported with props, which did not appear adequate to the weight they were to sustain.

The inside of the house was not less ruinous. The wainscot was rotted to pieces, and the wall, which appeared thro' the large holes decay had made in it, damp had covered with mould so thick, that each spot seemed a little wood; whereon the spiders, having taken advantage of the convenience it offered, had spread numberless webs. The floors were as decayed as the wainscot, and so full of holes, that one could not walk but at the peril of one's limbs; and in many places the grass had grown up to a tolerable height, and weeds flourished most luxuriantly.

The ground round the house had once been a moat, but was now become a bog, wherein large families of frogs had fixed their abode, and kept a never-ceasing croaking; which made a proper base to the pert chirp of the crickets, who inhabited the chimnies. To the music of these was added the whooting of two owls, who lived in an old yew-tree, just under my window, and contended with a neighbouring screech-owl which should most constantly serenade me.

All these animals, as if desirous of entertaining the stranger who was just come amongst them, were particularly sonorous the first night; and to complete the whole, the house-dog, unused to be disturbed by the arrival of equipages and horses, was put into such agitation, that he could not recompose his spirits, but howled without ceasing till morning.

One would imagine, that a person, whose whole soul was so filled with inward agony, was incapable of being affected by outward circumstances: But I experienced the contrary; for these I have mentioned turned grief into horror, and I could scarcely preserve myself from distraction.

The inhabitants of this falling mansion were an old steward and his wife, and their only child, a young woman about nineteen years old, whose countenance expressed the simplicity of her country breeding, added to that of her youth and innocence, and at the same time indicated so much good nature, that I thought, if I might have been allowed her company, it would have proved some little alleviation to my melancholy; But of this I had little hope; for my gaoler would suffer no one to be in the room alone with me, tho' she continually complained of the slavery of attending of me: Not with a great deal of reason; for she never
came

came into the room but at the necessary times of bringing me food; so that I was always obliged to sit in the dark till supper, and the evenings were then grown pretty long, as it was in the beginning of November. Nor was I better provided with fire; for tho' I had little to do but to take care of it, yet it was with great difficulty I could keep it in; for she would not let any coals be left in the room, nor any to be brought me but at the time I have mentioned. Depression of spirits makes one cold, and the season was sharp for the time of year; so that I was almost perished: And the dampness of my room gave me a very violent cold, which I could never get free from while I was there.

My windows had been nailed up before I came; but the closeness which might have been feared, was remedied by the great winds which came in, the casements being very old, and the sashes of them much shattered. In-

deed, the crevices round the whole room were numerous; from all which I received most refreshing breezes.

Great endeavours were used to render my food a means of mortification; for the little that was given me was of the very worst sort, and designedly dirty, which disturbed me most; for as I had no appetite, it was very difficult for me to eat enough to keep me alive.

But none of these outward circumstances, nor my tattered bed, which did not defend me from the air, nor the feather bed, which by damp was all clotted into great lumps, as hard as so many tennis-balls, and made my whole body sore and almost black and blue, nor a thousand other things, which would have appeared grievous to a mind at ease, gave me any pain, in comparison of my anxious desire to see Captain Turnham and my child, or at least to know how they did, particularly

ticularly the latter, whom my dreams, in the short periods of sleep I could obtain, represented continually to me as dead or dying; nor was my imagination, when awake, much less cruel.

Perhaps, had I been permitted to take either air or exercise, or had any indulgence been allowed me which could have proved of a little service to my health, or relief to my mind, I might have been better able to bear my sorrows; but every thing round me was as dismal as my own thoughts; and what refreshment could I expect from sleep, when my lullaby was a serenade of all the animals I have mentioned.

My despair was risen to such a pitch, that I was in continual fear of losing my senses. I was almost blind with crying and want of sleep; and both my health and appearance were so affected, that I had reason to hope life would not long hold out against so

severe a distress; but death, which seemed so desirable to one in my condition, was rendered more dreadful by the thought of dying without a friend to close my eyes, with no one whose compassion would endeavour to relieve my agonies, or whose affection would abate the sense of pain; and if I considered death as a passage into another world, the reflexion was still more horrible.

CHAP.



C H A P. XV.

— Tho' he posted e'er so fast,
His fear was greater than his haste.
For Fear, tho' fleetier than the wind,
Believes 'tis always left behind.

Hun.]

IN this situation I continued above three weeks, without any alteration, except an increase of ill humour in my gaoler, who became every day more weary of her employment. Even the gratification of her spite and cruelty could not recompense her for the mortification she received from the dullness of the place. She had indeed provided as well as she could for herself. The steward had repaired the corner of the house which he inhabited; and she got a room in that part; indulged herself in a very plentiful

table, and in every gratification the place could allow her: But still it was too wretched a spot to be rendered tolerable by the brightest human invention.

I found, by what she said, that Mr. Merton had promised to relieve her from her post before that time, by sending some other person to take care of me: But whether he had not been able to find a fit successor (no easy task, I am sure), or whether he was glad to get rid of us both at once, I cannot tell; but certain it is, she received no intelligence of a substitute; which increased her ill-humour so much, that she was still more lavish of her abuse, and was more in the room with me for that purpose. The case was hard; for, however the law might esteem Mr. Merton and I one, no two people certainly were ever more divided in fact; therefore I had little title to the whole sum of fury,

— of giving Cap.

of which we were then become pretty equal objects.

Fretting, and the dampness of the place, at last proved my friends; for my gaoler was taken with a fever, which, as she was never negligent in care of herself, confined her to her room for some time. She transmitted the care of me to the steward's wife, who was a quiet woman, and often deputed her daughter to give me what she thought necessary attendance.

My situation now began to mend: They were not only civil to me, but much more attentive to my convenience; and I became better accommodated in every respect: But the girl, whose name was Sally, desired me not to mention to Madam, that they did not strictly follow her example, as she had commanded them.

I conceived hopes, if not of effecting an escape, at least of giving Captain

tain Turnham some account of my situation, by Sally's assistance: I therefore took every occasion of talking with her, and pressed her to give me as much of her company as she could. The good-natured girl was so affected by the melancholy life I led, and by finding me always crying, that she very readily complied. Her mother soon began to be alarmed, fearing, by the bad account she had had of me, that I might corrupt her daughter; but Sally assured her I must be the best lady in the world; for she never received so much good advice from any body.

This might well be true; no one is so capable of warning a young person against the errors into which youth and passion may lead them, as she who has experienced all the distress which is the usual consequence. Whenever I had an opportunity, humanity led me to advise her to shun the rock on which all my happiness had been shipwrecked;

wrecked ; and one of the subjects of my lectures was a mercenary marriage, as I looked upon that as my first step to ruin, tho' not a voluntary one.

In pursuance of the design I had on this young girl, I examined into what degree of dependence they had on Mr. Merton, and found it was pretty considerable. All they possessed was got in his service ; and that not being equal to what a steward's profits often are, they still wished a continuance of their employment, that they might increase the little fortune they had gained. This did not encourage my hopes ; but as it was the only slender twig I could catch hold of, I was not willing easily to relinquish it.

I found Sally had a great curiosity to know my real history ; which generosity of nature inclined her to think was more favourable to me than my persecutor represented it. As I hoped for some advantage from her pity, I
was

was not unwilling to satisfy her. I could not pretend to conceal my guilt; but endeavoured, as much as possible, to suppress such circumstances as were most atrocious. I did not attempt to defend my actions; but the heavy sufferings they had brought upon me, made them excite more compassion than censure. And the tears, which flowed during my narration, washed them pure in the eyes of the good-natured Sally. She wept with me, and appeared so touched at every circumstance I mentioned, that I saw plainly her heart was not free. The tenderest heart could not melt so feelingly for the pangs of a lover, if it had not been softened by love.

I then drew her in to give me an account of the state of her affections; and, by being her confidant, became a sharer in them. I learned from her, that she was not insensible to the addresses of a young farmer, who lived near ten miles off; but his fortune not
being

being so good as her father and mother thought she might expect, they made some opposition to their marriage, tho' not enough to discourage their hopes.

I took the first opportunity of setting before the eyes of Sally's mother the danger of disappointing a young woman's affections, when there was no great impropriety in the indulgence of them: This my own misfortunes made a natural subject; and I could therefore do it without seeming to dictate to her. I was so earnest in the cause, that it would have been hard if my arguments had been quite unavailing. I had the satisfaction of finding they made some impression; and it ingratiated me so much with Sally, that I ventured to open my intentions to her, which were no less than to get her lover to assist me in my escape. The proposal was bold; but I understood that my persecutor was so near recovered,

recovered, that I had little time to effect it in.

Sally was startled at the thought of such an attempt: She knew her father's interest, and was unwilling her lover should incur his displeasure. It was difficult to obviate her objections, which were too just: However, I could not easily relinquish my hopes; and told her, that the distance he lived at would prevent his being suspected; and that if he would bring a couple of horses, one for me, and another for himself, I was a good rider, and the nights were long enough to allow us time to get a great way from home before day-light. My room was on the ground floor; and I thought it would not be impracticable to break the case of the casements, which was extremely old; and by her account I found there was only a common lock to the door of the yard into which my window opened, and that he might easily take off.

My

My part could not be done without a good deal of noise; for old as the window was, it would require a great deal of force to break it: But the part of the house which was inhabited was so far from my room, that there was no great danger of being heard. To strengthen the attack I made on Sally's humanity, I promised to give her lover ten guineas, if he would grant me the assistance I asked. This I had the power of performing; for Captain Turham had paid me twenty pounds the night before I left him; and, for fear of being robbed of a sum I could not conveniently spare, I sowed it within the lining of my stays, where it remained till I had this means offered me of laying it out for my liberty.

After many prayers and persuasions, I prevailed on Sally to write her lover the proposal I had made her; to intimate that she was desirous he should comply; and to let him know it must
be

be effected the next night, as I should have the power of making some progress in breaking down my window before the family went to rest; which could not be done, if my gaoler was able to come into my room; for she examined every place most circum-spectly before she went to bed.

Sally had a favourable answer to her letter: The young farmer consented to an enterprize, which so well suited a lover, and was agreeable to his mistress.

I found the task I had undertaken was more difficult than I expected; old as the wall was, it made great resistance; and I had no instrument but a poker. After having fatigued myself almost to death, I began to despair of success; and saw myself in danger of still worse treatment from the discovery of my design. My disappointment was a sufficient affliction; but this was an additional distress, and
animated

animated me to continue my attempt, till I lost all strength in my hands, and was reduced to sit down in an agony of despair, which almost distracted me.

But my new knight-errant having waited at the door, from whence he had taken the lock, till he began to fear there was some mistake, came into the yard, and past my window, which was open enough for him to hear me uttering part of my distress. Hereupon he endeavoured to assist me; and so successfully, that he made a breach large enough for me to get out of it, tho' not without tearing both my cloaths and flesh.

When this was once effected, we soon got on our horses, and proceeded with the expedition of persons who had every thing at stake. To avoid discovery, we took a cross road, part of which was extremely bad; but the night was too dark for us to see danger, and my joy too great to suffer me
to

to fear any; and my guide was used to all sorts of roads. Our having taken this course made it longer before we came to a town; and I was not inclined to hire a chaise at the first we arrived at, as I thought, that, by avoiding to do so, I might escape my pursuers knowlege; for if they could hear nothing of me there, they would scarcely inquire farther on the same road.

Thus I lengthened my ride, and increased my fatigue; but it had the effect I desired. When we got to the second town, I gave my guide his reward, with a thousand thanks, and many kind messages to the good-natured Sally, whose love's success I heartily wished; and made the young man promise to inform me of it, whenever their marriage was completed. I have had the satisfaction of hearing from him, that they attained their wishes, and were happy in the possession of each other, and the enjoyment

joyment of easy circumstances; both which he attributed, in great measure, to the money I had given him; a sum he then had particular occasion for, to enable him to buy some stock that was offered him for less than half the usual price.

This circumstance has led me to digress a little from myself, as it is an incident which gave me more satisfaction than most things that have befallen me.

CHAP.



C H A P. XVI.

Man is but man, inconstant still and various;
 There's no to-morrow in him like to day :
 Perhaps the atoms, rolling in his brain,
 Make him think honestly this present hour ;
 The next, a swarm of base ungrateful thoughts
 May mount aloft. —————

DRYDEN.

TH O' I was much tired with my ride, having been so long out of practice, yet I would not venture to allow myself any rest till the night following, by which time I was not half a day's journey from London. I was unwilling to stop when I had got within that distance; but was so excessively weary, that even the earnestness of my inclination could not enable me to go on.

The

The next day by noon I arrived in London; and going to the house where I had lodged with a beating heart, from my anxious expectation of seeing my child, if it was alive, I was told that Captain Turnham had sent for it to Reading, and discharged the lodging. I did not think it advisable to stay in a place where I had been so long, and probably might have been discovered. I took another lodging, and wrote directly to Captain Turnham to inform him of all that had happened to me, and of my impatience to see him and my child; yet intimated my fear of coming to Reading, where all my wishes would carry me, lest I might be as unfortunate in another visit, as in the last.

Captain Turnham, on receiving my letter, was so impatient to see me, that, without waiting for permission, he ordered his servant to give out that he was too ill to stir out of his room, and came post to London, where he was

received by me with the sincerest joy ; but his seemed greatly troubled, by observing me so emaciated and altered, as shocked him excessively.

It was great pleasure to me, to find the Captain really glad of my return : I feared the inconvenience of being incumbered with me might incline him to wish to be quit of one, who could now have none of the charms of novelty. He was obliged to return to quarters the next day ; but appointed to meet me at our usual place of rendezvous, where he would bring his boy, and deliver him up to me.

This was performed ; and I had again the pleasure of indulging a mother's fondness over my helpless infant, whose health was improved under his father's care.

Nothing new happened in our situation, till I was again near lying-in of my third child ; and then the regiment

ment Captain Turnham was in, received orders to march into the most northern part of Scotland, where quarters were appointed them.

Mr. Merton had just brought his cause to a conclusion; and a divorce was decreed him, sufficient proof being brought of my having had a child after I left him: But Captain Turnham's prudent care prevented Mr. Merton's being able to bring witnesses to accuse him; and tho' no one doubted of the person, yet the law could not charge him. I had made no defence, nor appeared at all in it; all the pains Mr. Merton took could not discover where I was: But the proofs were too strong to require my confession; therefore the cause was finished without my presence; which gave me liberty of living where I pleased, no one now having any power over me.

This freedom was very acceptable, as it enabled me to accompany Captain

Turnham to his quarters; tho' the condition I was in rendered the thought of such a journey very formidable; and I knew not whether the place where I was going would afford me tolerable assistance. But these considerations could have no great weight with one, to whom there was no other being existent but Captain Turnham. I felt myself the outcast of the world: He was the only one I could expect should look on me without contempt; and to have staid in London, when he was so far off, would have appeared to me little less solitary than to have been placed in a desert. Besides, I felt the pains of dependance so sensibly, that I would have willingly endured much inconvenience, to lessen the expence I was to Captain Turnham.

We had been but a little time settled in Scotland before I was brought-to-bed of another boy. I rejoiced in the sex of my children, as it saved me from all fears of their becoming as
forlorn

forlorn and wretched beings as their mother.

I had one comfort in this lying-in superior to the others; and which more than compensated the thousand inconveniencies we were subject to in the place we then lived; Captain Turnham and I inhabited the same house, whereby I had much more of his company.

This, tho' a circumstance then highly agreeable to me, was, upon the whole, I believe an evil. Most men are soon tired by possession: Captain Turnham, endowed with more than common constancy, was proof against this general cure for above three years; and perhaps might have continued so much longer, had there remained any difficulties, or necessary concealments, in our commerce: but now it bore all the appearance of matrimony; we were established in a settled menage; and as we were unknown in Scotland,

we assumed the same name; and interchanged the appellations of husband and wife as freely, as if the matrimonial service had given us a title to them.

Our life was more domestic than is usual in that state; the place afforded no company to interrupt us; nor had either of us business to occasion those short absences, which are so well rewarded by the pleasures of meeting. Captain Turnham was not fond of rural sports; we were neither of us accustomed to read, so that we lived a constant *tête à tête*. Our children made our only variety; and, when they became capable of instruction, the teaching them afforded a little employment.

Love requires to be treated with great delicacy: Long separations, or a constant course of various dissipations, starve it; and being always together, without interruption, or additional amusement, is as apt to surfeit it.

The

The right medium which should be preserved in these cases, is seldom learnt but by the experience we gain from having fallen into one of the errors, and felt its fatal effects.

I have heard of a lady, who, jealous that the gentleman she loved preferred another woman, contrived to shut them up for some time together, convinced indifference must be the consequence; and she thereby have room to hope for a return to her passion, when her lover's prepossession in favour of another was cured. I never heard a certain account of her success; but am persuaded it would seldom fail.

We are all so full of faults and follies, that we could no otherwise become the objects of a violent passion, but from the ignorance of those who conceive it. They see us, when nature and art combine to shew us to the best advantage. The rugged temper
L 4 can

can assume a smile of gentleness, and for a time wear as smooth a brow as if no storm could ruffle it; the mercenary will appear disinterested; the avaricious put on the mask of generosity: In short, there is no part a person cannot act for a season, if they have but intermediate spaces, during which they can indulge their natural disposition.

Thus, therefore, while we borrow the smiles and graces to render our persons attractive, and assume the semblance of every virtue to confirm the charm, we are beloved equal to what we appear; and as we hide our imperfections, we lead captive every affection of the soul. But when, by being seen every hour, our follies and our frailties become conspicuous, the love which was founded on a supposition we were free from them, must decay; and when we show ourselves subject to all the failings of mortality, we must expect to be loved with only a

a mortal passion, in which eternal constancy can have no share.

Of this I was very sensible; but yet I could not avoid being greatly affected, when I saw Captain Turnham's fondness abate. I was always at work; his vivacity could not for ever be proof against a dismal situation, and a total want of company. Conversation would flag, and even playing with his children would often become tedious. *Ennui*, that great destroyer of the happiness of those who have no misfortunes to distress them, reached even our solitude, and oppressed Captain Turnham's spirits. I had no particular reason to complain; for he grew as weary of every thing about him, as of me; but the difference was, I only was sensible of it, and that to a great degree. His affection was the only thing in the world that could afford me any satisfaction; I had no treasure but that, no friend but him, no one else to receive me, to sup-

port me, or even to afford me the least countenance.

I had placed my affections on him from my earliest youth; for him I had given up all the comforts affluence can bestow; and, what was much more, to him I had sacrificed my conscience, my fortune, and my fame. For all these blessings his love had appeared to me a sufficient exchange; how much then must I have valued it! And in proportion, you will easily imagine, my grief must be, at losing it; for "if I lost his love, I lost my all." This I could say with more propriety than it is generally applied, having, in reality, nothing in this world beside to enable me to endure my existence.

CHAP.



C H A P. XVII.

And as pale sickness does invade
 Your frailer part, the breaches made
 In that fair lodging, still more clear
 Make the bright guest, your soul, appear.

WALLER.

IF I had been able to reflect seriously
 on Captain Turnham's behaviour,
 I ought to have thought myself fortunate
 in having so long enjoyed his affections:
 Few men shew so much constancy;
 but the fate of others seldom prepares us for our own.

Tho' I had cause to grieve, I had
 none to complain; for the Captain's
 indifference, which came by degrees,
 was only the common weakness of
 human nature: But he always behaved
 to me with regard and civility; and

continued humane, tho' he ceased to be tender.

This was more conducive to his honour than to my peace; for my affection was unabated; and mere humanity is but an unsatisfactory return for extreme love. But I did not from this receive more pain than from my pride, which now felt I was supported by his charity: While he was attached to me, he was insensible to the diminution of his fortune; but when it continued to lessen, without yielding him any gratification, he could not but be uneasy at it.

For a long time I appeared blind to this alteration, fearing to turn indifference into dislike, and that my company, which was now only dull to him, should become irksome; but at last, when I saw he grew alarmed at the decrease of his fortune, I could not help offering to deliver him from so great a burden, assuring him, that I
had

had rather venture any distress, than bring him into difficulties.

Captain Turnham, with an appearance of real regard and generosity, intreated me never to mention such a thought any more ; for that he would always share his fortune with me ; and felt too much gratitude for the attachment I had shewn him, ever to let me suffer by it, in any respect from which he could save me ; and that if time had cooled his passion, nothing should ever extinguish his generosity.

I could not deny there being a great deal in his proceeding ; but the most delicate generosity is known by few. A person may give much, and yet have little of it. Vanity, a sense of duty, or several other motives, may occasion donations ; but the truly generous will wish to conceal their bounty from the objects of it, and pretend some gratification to themselves, in every thing they do for the good of another ;

another; they know that poverty gives pangs less sharp than the humiliating benefactions of indelicate persons. Nor ought an extreme sensibility, in this respect, to be called pride in the indigent; for to be without it would be meanness. The casual gifts of the rich may be received without suffering; but none can endure a settled state of dependance, that has a possibility of avoiding it, who has not a groveling mind.

What friendship bestows, we receive with pleasure; it proves the affection which we cherish; and while we feel the benefit of the effect, we rejoice more in reflecting on the cause. Those who love,

*— In owing, owe not,
And are at once indebted and discharg'd.*

Had Captain Turnham attributed his behaviour to friendship, which had succeeded to love, and which his conduct would well have warranted, I
should

should have more contentedly accepted his good offices; but when it was made the gift of generosity, one only consideration could make me continue the dependant on his bounty; and that was our children: I could not leave them; nor could he consent to part with them. Indeed if he had, it was impossible for me to support them and myself.

My love for them was accompanied with no alloy; for they returned it in the tenderest manner; and made it impossible for me to leave them to the care of those, who would feel none of a mother's fondness. This tie I fancied was all; but I have since learned, that my affection for Captain Turnham was still so great, that tho' beheld by him with indifference, his absence would have appeared still a heavier misfortune.

We lived in our solitary situation four years, when we were rather removed

moved than relieved; Captain Turnham, with the rest of the regiment, being ordered to Gibraltar. There likewise I accompanied him.

This place, tho' not agreeable to the Captain, was less dismal than that we left; but more so to me in one respect: For as we there met more who knew him, and my history, I no longer appeared his wife; but was known for what I really was.

This shut me out of the company of all the women of any consideration; and had another effect more disagreeable to me; for, in the dejected state of my mind, I was not very fit for company. The gentlemen soon perceived, or naturally apprehended, that the Captain's love for me must be worn out: And whether women were scarce or ugly there I know not; but several were willing to deliver him of a mistress, who they thought must be grown too much an incumbrance, for
any

any addresses they could make to her, to be taken as an offence by him.

Amongst the number who thought that the woman, whose frailty had rendered her the mistress of one man, would not refuse to be so to others, the most assiduous was a person of great distinction there. He offered me affluence and love, two blessings of which I sensibly felt the want; but the latter appeared to me desirable only from one person; and I could not think of obtaining the other by prostitution.

I had some reason to believe Captain Turnham would not have been sorry, if I had proved more complying; but he seemed to honour my constancy, and respect the perseverance with which I refused all that gentleman's proposals. This was a great gratification to me: I flattered myself I had acquired his good opinion; this strengthened me in my resistance; for
there

there was nothing I could not have suffered to fix his esteem, which, after my conduct, appeared so difficult for me to obtain : But a man's vanity pleads in excuse of the faults we commit for him ; and his great idea of his own charms makes him think us less blameable, than if any other had been the occasion of our frailty.

In the third year of our abode at Gibraltar, the Captain was seized with a fever ; it was not violent, but tedious ; and, after suffering a long time, he was at last as sensible as those about him, that his death approached. I had nursed him with the utmost assiduity ; and the near prospect of parting with me, and his children, rekindled his affection for me, and still increased his for them. He lamented in the most pathetic terms, that he should leave us destitute of any provision ; tho' he had the satisfaction of reflecting, that his did not proceed from extravagance, but from the necessary

cessary expences of our family, which exceeded the income of his small commission, and by degrees had consumed his whole fortune.

He asked my pardon for the indifference he had shown to me for several years past; and thanked me for my constant attachment to him, with so much tenderness as made me forget all his former coldness, and feel as much distraction at the approach of his dissolution, as if his life was a certain source of happiness.

It is scarcely possible to suffer a sharper affliction than I did for his death; which was increased by the sensibility of my children, who were old enough to feel great grief for their father, tho' they were not apprized of the full extent of their loss: Nor indeed were they capable of understanding it; for our affections generally come earlier than our prudence.

Upon

Upon examining the state of the Captain's affairs, I found that his fortune was entirely spent; and there remained by us scarcely enough to discharge the expences of his funeral.

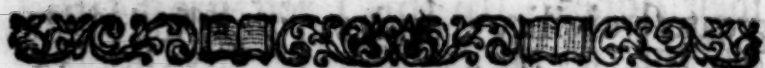
This could not but be an additional grief to the mother of three children, which began now to require education, and yet were far from being able to contribute towards their support, the eldest being but nine years old. He had gone to school from the time we came to Gibraltar; but he was now little likely to continue there.

As soon as Captain Turnham was dead, some of the persons, who before had addressed me, renewed their proposals; but they were accompanied with such expressions of satisfaction in the decease of their favoured rival, that they turned my indifference into detestation, and I rejected them all; shewing that the bare remembrance of a man so much more justly esteemed
by

by me, was sufficient to frustrate all their hopes. In this I felt great satisfaction, as an exercise of my fidelity to him; which was my first wish, tho' I had no prospect of a support but from a continuance in the way of life to which I had been so long accustomed; but to persevere in it for pecuniary motives, was very irksome to me. To my romantic disposition, love had given a sort of sanction to my actions; and tho' they were vicious, yet they appeared to me less mean, than those of a mercenary prostitute.

With this turn of mind, it is easy to imagine, that I could not determine on a course so odious to me, while I could subsist without it. Accordingly I sold the little effects we had, and raised a small sum, on which I lived with the utmost frugality for some time, waiting an opportunity of returning to England.

CHAP.



C H A P. XVIII.

As th' Elm, which of its arms the ax bereaves,
 New strength and vigour from its wounds receives;
 Their rage by loss of blood is kindled more;
 And with their guns, like hurricanes, they roar,
 Like hurricanes, the knotted oaks they tear,
 Scourge the vex'd ocean, and torment the air.

DEN.

I Thought myself very fortunate,
 when I heard that a Captain, with
 whom I had some acquaintance, was
 ordered to sail for England. I had
 not seen him from the time of Captain
 Turnham's death; but on this occa-
 sion I applied to him. I was able to
 pay but little for my passage; and there-
 fore address'd him with some fears of
 not succeeding; but was more fortu-
 nate than I could have hoped.

The

The Captain received me with the greatest civility; and very politely assured me, that my company would render his voyage much more agreeable than he had expected to find it.

I thought it necessary to intimate, that I was very sorry it was not in my power to make the return for the favour I asked which I could wish; but should be glad to know what would be required for my passage and my childrens.

To this the Captain very generously answered, He should think himself overpaid by our company; for that he always found it very irksome to be shut up with no other conversation than that of his ship's crew, which was not generally the most agreeable. Tho' I pressed his agreeing to accept what little I could pay, yet he continued the same assertion, and would not hear of any thing I could say against it.

This generosity was so seasonable a relief, as it afforded me a support for some time, without taking from me the little remaining money I had, that I should have accepted it without hesitation, had it not been for the peculiarity of my situation. I feared the Captain's bounty was not quite disinterested; and therefore could not take the benefit of it with so little ceremony as I should otherwise have done; but was not sorry that he persisted in his offer of conveying me at no expence to England, tho' I thought it proper to contend with him upon the subject.

Before we set out I had my suspicions strengthened: His attentions to me were beyond what common politeness dictates; and he shewed a fondness for my children, which I could not suppose he felt. However, I was not in a situation to stand on great delicacies; therefore I did not alter my purpose, which must have been attended with the greatest inconveniencies.

After

After we put out to sea, the Captain became more explicit in his addresses; and told me, that he had loved me during Mr. Turnham's life; but respected my attachment to him, and my great constancy, too much to attempt to obtain my favour: That my conduct to that gentleman had made his esteem correspond so well with his love, that it had fixed all his affections on me; and if he might be so happy as to succeed Mr. Turnham in my heart, I should find that his gratitude and constancy were equal to my wishes, and he would look on my children as his own.

As this was a subject he often began, he communicated to me the views he had in favour of my children; which were so much to their advantage, and at the same time so practicable, that I had great reason to expect they must succeed. He promised me likewise, that if I would grant his suit, he would make a settlement on me as

soon as we came on shore ; and such a provision for my children as should secure plenty both to me and them, if death took him out of the world first.

This was greater good fortune than I could by any means have expected ; and there was such a visible sincerity in the Captain's manner, that I could not doubt his fulfilling his promise. This delivered me from all the solicitude to which I was before a prey, when I looked on my helpless children ; and my heart felt a degree of composure, that I welcomed as a long absent friend. But I was to be brought to true happiness by the road of disappointment and sorrow.

One day in the afternoon, as we were sitting in the Captain's cabin, and playing with my children, of whom the Captain seemed as fond as if they were his own, we were alarmed with a cry, that a French man of war was coming towards us. The
 Captain

Captain immediately ran upon deck, and found it true. He prepared every thing for an attack; and had but just leisure to step down to me, and beg I would support my spirits as well as I could, during a scene which must be shocking to one of my sex; assuring me that he did not doubt giving a good account of the French ship (that was his phrase); for his was a good one, and his men brave fellows.

The attack began soon after he left me; and was so very terrible, that I was scarcely in my senses. I kept my three children embraced the whole time, determined, if possible, that we would go together; for I imagined it probable a ball might reach us; but I was so stunned with the thunder of the guns, and so heartily frightened, that I was incapable of any farther thought.

But at once I was roused by the Captain's being brought into the cabin pale and bloody. They laid him

down on the bed, and left him there. The spectacle filled me with horror and grief. My children screamed with terrors, which added to mine; and the first moments were passed in distraction: But a recollection that there might be a possibility of assisting him, brought me to my reason: I went to him, but found him without sense or motion: However, hoping it might be only the consequences of the great effusion of blood, I tore my apron and handkerchief, to tie up his wounds. Before I had performed it, the surgeon came, who took my office out of my hands; but told me, that there was no hopes; for he believed one of the wounds was thro' his heart.

The surgeon was too right in his judgment; for the poor Captain never shewed any signs of life, tho' every thing was tried to revive him. This shock took from me all thought about the success of the fight, and of any dangers to which I was exposed, till

loud

loud huzzas made us sensible that our ship had obtained the victory; but, upon inquiry, it was too much shattered, and all were in such confusion from the Captain's death, that they thought it not proper to pursue the enemy far.

A resolution I much approved; for the sea was now become terrible to me; and my grief for the Captain was very sincere; which will be easily believed, as my interest was so much concerned; for his death robbed me of the hopes on which I had so firmly depended, both for myself and children: But all my affliction was not only on this account; for I had so great an esteem for his generosity, and so much gratitude for his humane intentions for me and my children, that I sincerely regretted the loss of so worthy a man.

The wind was fair; and it was not long before we got into port. The

person who had been appointed administrator in case of the Captain's death, before he went abroad, when he made up the Captain's accounts, demanded of me the usual price of a passenger; and as I had no proof of the Captain's generous intentions, I could not defend myself. The unexpectedness of his death had prevented his giving me any security in this respect, or of making any disposition in my favour.

The demand upon me was greater than I had money to acquit. What I had, I offered; but the administrator would not believe it was my whole stock, and threatened me with imprisonment, if I did not advance the remainder. This was a dreadful situation: I had no redress in my power; and thought the hazard was too great to wait the event; so took the first opportunity of going on shore; and as we were then come to Deptford, a very short time carried me and my children to London.

I wrote him word from thence that I had left the ship, not out of a desire of depriving him of what money I had, but to save myself from being imprisoned for the payment of what I had not. I asserted the promise the Captain had given me of taking nothing for my passage; but at the same time offered to pay him all I possessed, if he insisted on it; and informed him where to direct a letter, to acquaint me with his resolution; intending to take care that he should not by that means find out where I was.

The administrator now began to fear, that by too obstinately requiring all he might demand, he should lose what he might get. He therefore dispatched a letter to me directly, and offered me an acquittance on the terms I proposed.

Thus the dispute was settled, and I left without a shilling for the support of myself and children. All the consolation

solation I had, was the liberty I had feared to lose, and which now I began to think was more dreadful than imprisonment, as that would have obliged the person who put me there, to maintain me. Certainly those must have a great love for freedom, who think it a recompence for the want of a subsistence; and indeed what liberty can a person in the utmost want boast of possessing? Necessity is the worst bondage; it forces our wills, and enslaves our bodies; it obliges us to do things most contrary to our choice.

CHAP.



C H A P. XIX.

Death only can be dreadful to the bad :

To innocence 'tis like a bug-bear, dress'd

To frighten children : Pull but off his mask,

And he'll appear a friend. —

DRYDEN.

DESTITUTE of money and of hope,
 I was in the utmost distress of
 mind and body. My children, who
 had hitherto been a consolation under
 all my misfortunes, were now my
 heaviest grievance, as I felt their wants
 more sensibly than my own ; and had
 no hope of being able to gain a sup-
 port for so many. This thought almost
 discouraged me from doing what I
 might, because I knew it would not be
 sufficient. However, pressed by neces-
 sity, as much as by despair, I applied
 to my landlady to procure me some

M 5 needle-

needlework; the only thing I was capable of doing. My landlady, who kept a little shop, told me, she had a good customer, from whom she fancied I might receive employment; and went directly to ask for some, and accordingly brought me a little.

I dispatched this work with the utmost haste a starving person could make, to procure food for herself, and those who were still dearer to her, and prepared to carry it home; whereupon my landlady hinted, that at my return she should expect to receive what was paid me, in part of my week's lodging, which was then due.

This was a great damp on the joy I felt in going to claim the trifle I had gained; which was so little, as sufficiently proved the impossibility of maintaining, with my own hands, myself and family. I had not long to indulge my reflections; and they were too melancholy for me to wish
their

their continuance; for the house, to which I was to carry my work, was very near.

I was led in to the mistress of it, whose appearance, as well as that of every thing about her, left me in no doubt of her occupation. She inquired into my circumstances; which I told, with that readiness wherewith the unhappy always relate their sufferings.

She asked me, if I thought it possible to maintain so many by my plain-work. I acknowledged I was sensible I could not; but could as yet think of no other means of livelihood. She then expatiated much on the advantages I might receive from a person remarkably engaging; an expression you must attribute to flattery, because there is now little appearance of it remaining; so great are the ravages made between that time and this, by a course of life, which destroyed my health;

and tormented my mind; a period so odious to my remembrance, that I shall pass over the relation as concisely as possible.

I shall therefore omit the arguments this woman used, and those still stronger which were urged by necessity, to prevail on me to add other means for my support to those I had already begun. My children were too great an incumbrance for her to wish to have me in her house: Her offers were more advantageous, as she left me at my liberty; and only claimed half of what was given me. Upon the strength of this agreement, she was sure to procure a considerable price for me; and tho' the bloom of youth was past, yet she composed so fine a romance for me, as gave a dignity to my appearance; which answered her purpose entirely, and consequently was equally profitable to me.

I had now a sufficient maintenance; but the vileness of the means whereby I gained it, rendered me miserable. I despised myself, and detested every one I conversed with; for I was excluded from the society of any but the most profligate and abandoned. They indeed thought my situation worthy their envy; because I enjoyed my liberty, as they called it, and had a great share in the products of my vice; whereas they were only maintained as slaves; and had as little the command of themselves, as if they were such. But I was too wretched to perceive this preference; and was no less unhappy than they were, tho' perhaps with less apparent reason.

The extreme melancholy which this course of life brought upon me, agreed very well with the romance the old bawd invented for me, and gave it an air of truth; and a distinction to me, which set me much above the rest. As disagreeable as the sight of the wretched

wretched is to most people, yet there was something so new and surprising, to see a woman, oppressed with melancholy, among a crew, where the most dissolute wantonness, the most frantic mirth, and abandoned licentiousness of manners reigned, that it had a great charm for many, and made them suppose there must be something very peculiar in the fate of a woman, who could cloath profligacy in the garb of modesty and afflicted virtue.

During this time, my eldest son died, and the second's health daily declined, and filled me with continual alarms. I had kept both of them at school from the time I was able to afford it. Their master was a man of very rigid piety, and a good scholar. The forward genius's of both these children charmed him: They learned so fast, that he thought they deserved his particular attention, and took more than common pains with them.

As

As he conceived it of still more consequence to instill religious principles into their tender minds, than to fill them with learning, his greatest care was employed in instructing them in their religion; he taught them both the faith and practice of christianity; and was delighted to see with what attention his little pupils listened to him, and how well they remembered all his doctrine.

The effect was greatly exemplified in the death of the eldest, who, with uncommon sagacity, perceived his end approaching, and bore it with amazing composure. Seeing me in the deepest affliction, he endeavoured to offer me all the consolation his principles could dictate. He begged me not to grieve for him; for “ he hoped
 “ he was going to a better world:
 “ That I had often told them how
 “ destitute their condition was; but
 “ that he was now hastening to a
 “ place, where all his wants would be
 “ supplied :

“ supplied: That he was sorry to
 “ leave so affectionate a mother; but
 “ received great comfort from think-
 “ ing he was going to a merciful and
 “ indulgent father; to Him, *who had*
 “ *so loved the world that he gave his*
 “ *only begotten Son, to the end we might*
 “ *not perish, but have everlasting life;*
 “ and hoped to be received by that
 “ Son, the God of mercy and love.”

He then gave his brother much good
 advice, intreating him “ since he might
 “ not, like himself, have the blessing of
 “ being taken so early out of a wicked
 “ world, to guard against all the tempt-
 “ ations of it; to bear afflictions,
 “ pain, and distress of every kind;
 “ to endure all that man can inflict,
 “ rather than offend his Maker and
 “ Redeemer.” He represented, “ how
 “ dreadful it must be for those to fall
 “ into the hands of the living God,
 “ who have nothing but wrath to ex-
 “ pect.”

A long time, like one inspired, did he expatiate on this subject, intending to warn his brother from the evil he might fall into; but how much more did his words affect me! His brother received his advice with satisfaction; had nothing to repent of; and resolved to regulate his conduct by it; but it filled me with horror and remorse. I felt, that they were my sins which deprived me of such an angel, before he knew the deplorable wickedness of his mother; which, to his divine disposition, must have been far worse than death.

After he had said all that he thought could be useful to me, or his brother, he begg'd the latter to request his school-master's presence; and that, as an additional obligation to all he had conferred upon him, he would come and pray by him.

The good man complied, and came directly. My son asked his pardon
for

for giving him that trouble; but told him, “ he thought he should pray
 “ with more satisfaction, and freedom
 “ of spirit, if he assisted him, than if
 “ any other performed that office; and
 “ had reason to believe his humanity
 “ would readily grant that favour to
 “ one whom he had blessed with so
 “ much of his care, and so many ad-
 “ mirable instructions.”

The good man burst into tears at so affecting a scene, and assured him,
 “ he looked upon the request, for
 “ which he apologized, as the highest
 “ obligation; and found his heart
 “ both warmed and edified by his be-
 “ haviour.”

My son then told him, he had one thing to wish, if it was not improper.
 “ He should feel great joy, if he might
 “ receive the sacrament; but, if the
 “ Doctor judged him too young, as
 “ he feared he was, he begged he
 “ would not, to comply with that in-
 “ clination,

“clination, indulge him in any thing
 “to which he thought it a presumption
 “in him to pretend.”

The Doctor replied, that “tho’ his
 “age seemed unfit, yet his understanding
 “was so perfect, and his principles so pure,
 “that he had no objection; on the contrary,
 “should receive great satisfaction from
 “admitting it to him; but feared too
 “long a service might oppress him.”

The poor boy assured him, “that,
 “so far from it, he must beg he
 “would read both the office for the
 “dying, and the whole communion
 “service; for it would refresh rather
 “than fatigue him; and he wished
 “death might find him at prayers,
 “that he might die, as he would rise
 “again, praising and adoring God.”

The good man desired to have every
 thing prepared directly, and, till his
 office began, indulged his tenderness,
 which

which made him grieve for my child as if he had been his own.

He turned to me, and told me " he supposed I would partake of the " communion with my son," and began the service not waiting for my answer. I felt myself not fit for so solemn an act of devotion, but knew not how to avoid it. I therefore conformed; but as the service proceeded, it awakened my conscience to so bitter a sense of my wickedness, that I fell into such an agony of horror at the thought of my iniquity, that I could not attempt to join in an act of worship with persons so unlike myself. I therefore, as obliged by the condition I was in, retired.

When the service was over, the old gentleman came to me: Supposing the agony which had seized me proceeded from my tenderness for my child, he meant to offer me some consolation. Accordingly he congratulated me " on
" having

“ having a son whose exemplary piety,
 “ ty, at an age when few think of
 “ religion, was so greatly edifying;
 “ and that when he considered his extreme youth he should be apt to
 “ believe him supernatural, if his brother was not as extraordinary for
 “ his years.” He endeavoured to persuade me that his death did not come too soon, since it would lead him to a glorious and blessed eternity.

He then shewed me how happy it was to be taken out of the world before he was tainted with the vices of it; and represented the danger to which he would have been exposed had he lived to a maturer age, in colours which set my own crimes in so strong a light, that while he lessened my grief for my son, he increased my affliction for myself.

He was interrupted by being again called by the poor boy; who, finding himself fail very fast, begged him to pray

pray again; and while he did so, he expired without a groan, with a smile of joy on his countenance, and hands lifted up in prayer.

I was now past listening to any consolation; so the good man left me, and went away, praying that all present might have as happy an end to this life, and as blessed a beginning of the next, as he made no doubt this youth had.

My conscience was too much awakened, to suffer me to continue my dissolute life: But I knew not by what means to subsist: However, as I had a trifle by me, I allowed myself time to reflect on all that offered itself to my thoughts.

I had heard of the institution of this Asylum; but my children appeared to me an insurmountable obstruction. I then fancied, that this good school-master was so excellent a man,
 9 that,

that, perhaps, if I confessed all my crimes, and told him that my children only prevented me from taking refuge here, he might possibly assist me in getting them off my hands, rather than hazard my being tempted to continue in a way of life so pernicious both to soul and body; tho', when the one is concerned, the other does not deserve the least consideration.

This thought occurred to me, as I was attending my children in a walk a little way out of town, which I had begun to practise, in hopes the air might be of service to the poor boy, who was now become my eldest son.

As I was forming the plan on which I should pursue the scheme, which appeared the only one that offered me a means of reformation, I passed by some children playing. The neatness of their dress, and the orderly manner they appeared in, tempted me to inquire who they were, and was told,
they

they were the offspring of penitents who had been, or were just going to be, received into the Magdalen-House; some of their mothers being detained out of it by sickness.

This awakened a most pleasing hope in me. On inquiry, I found the most humane Institutors of this charity did not object to the additional charge of children, since it doubled the benefit they conferred. I could not forbear examining into the care that was taken of these helpless infants; and was charmed to find how plentifully all their necessities were supplied, and the still greater attention that was paid to the cultivation of their minds, that they might be instructed to avoid all the vices which had occasioned their parents destruction, and the great danger their children had incurred of being no less unfortunate.

I let slip no time in presenting myself to this Hospital: I attended the
meeting

meeting the next day ; and was soon received, and my children taken care of.

Here has all my misfortunes ended ; and here I hope, by repentance, to wash out my sins. The hope of mercy is my consolation ; and great as my offences are, I know Divine mercy is greater ; and that can pardon what is too atrocious to be expiated by repentance ; but my life shall pass in petitions for that grace, which, by asking for, we are assured we may obtain ; and in praying for, and blessing, those who have offered me, and wretches like me, the power and means of reformation.

If, as we are told, those who save a soul shall shine like the stars in heaven, how bright must be that glory, which is reserved for the Beneficent Institutors of this charity ! They have found out a means for finite beings to

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do

do infinite benefit; since the good they have conferred on us will reach thro' all eternity; but their happiness therein exceeds ours, how great soever it may be, as much as it is *more blessed to give than to receive.*

F I N I S.

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Page 102. l. 7. for me, read one. P. 168. l. 8. after thing, r. on.

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Page 7. l. 18. for your, r. you. P. 29. l. 3. from the bottom, for or, r. and. P. 45. l. 5. after of, dele her. P. 53. l. 10. after in, dele a. P. 85. l. 16. after would, r. not. P. 98. l. 3. for was, r. is. P. 140. l. 1. for that, r. as. P. 199. l. 12. for time, r. times. P. 234. l. 7. for thinks, r. think. P. 234. last line but one, for his, r. this.

